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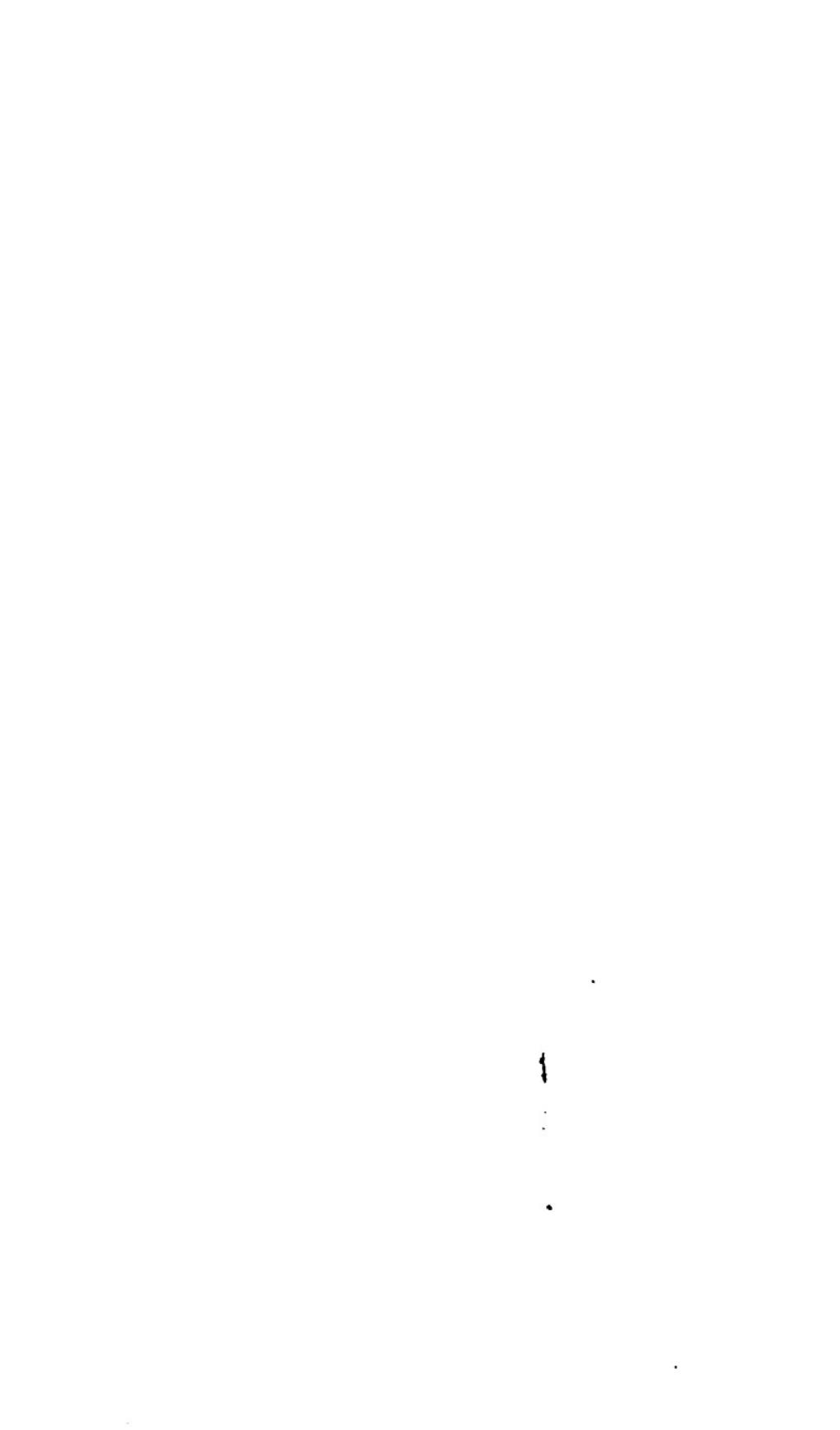
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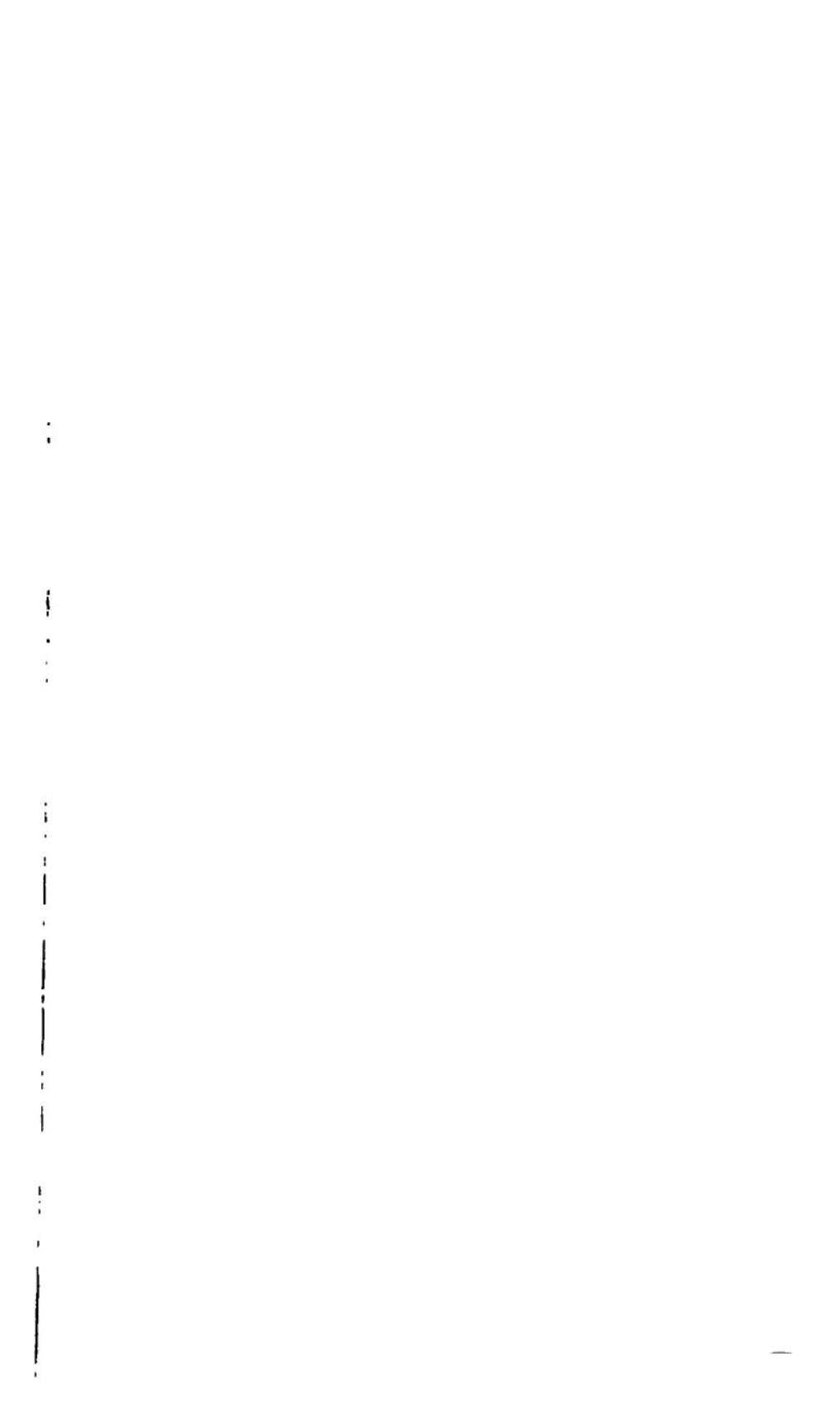
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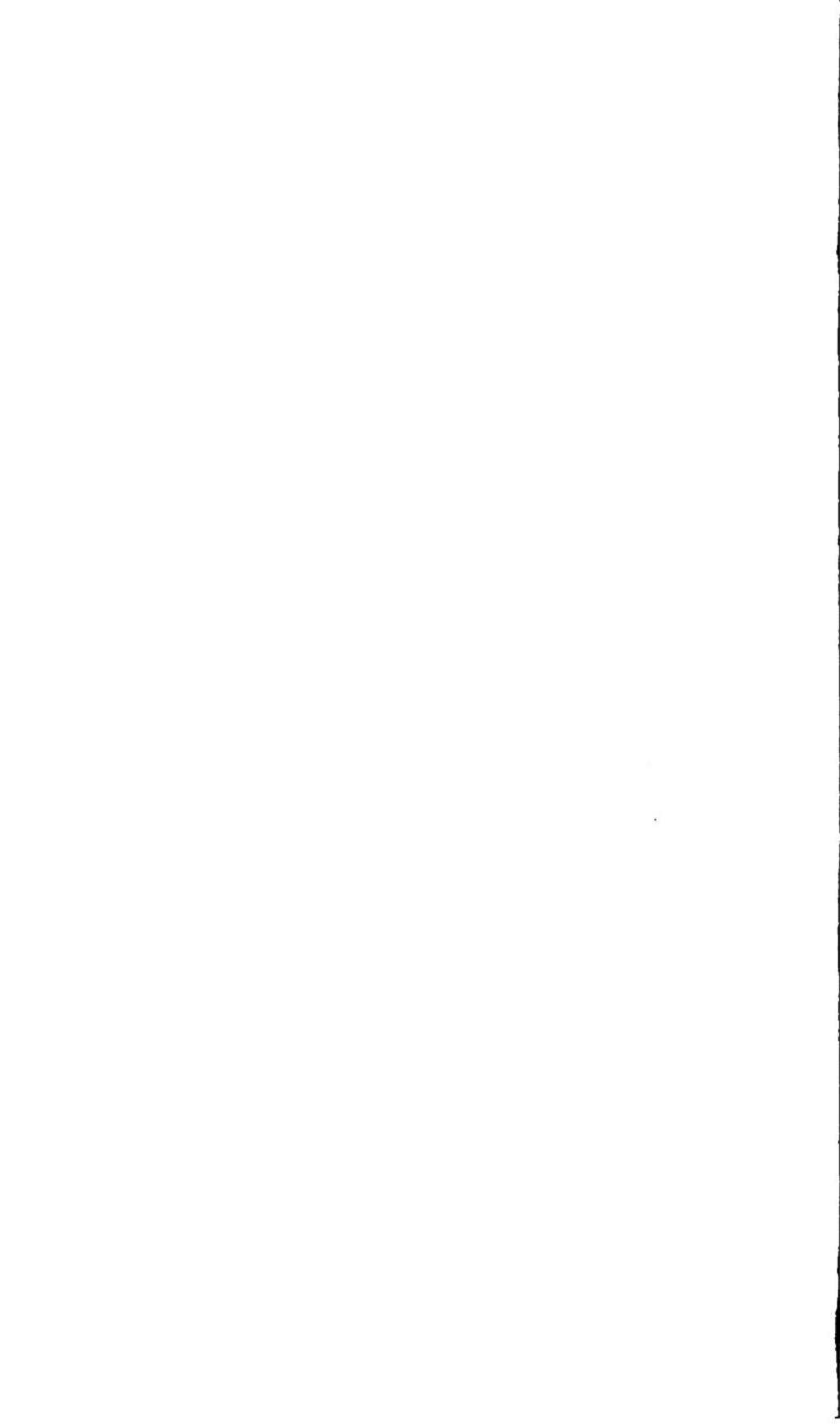
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I T A L Y.

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I T A L Y,

A Poem.

BY SAMUEL ROGERS.

PART THE FIRST.

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1823.



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I.

DAY glimmered in the east, and the white Moon
Hung like a vapour in the cloudless sky,
Yet visible, when on my way I went,
Thy gates, GENEVA, swinging heavily,
Thy gates so slow to open, swift to shut;
As on that Sabbath-eve when he arrived,*
Whose name is now thy glory, now by thee
Inscribed to consecrate (such virtue dwells
In those small syllables) the narrow street,
His birth-place—when, but one short step too late,

* Rousseau.

He sate him down and wept—wept till the morning;
Then rose to go—a wanderer thro' the world.

'Tis not a tale that every hour brings with it.
Yet at a City-gate, from time to time,
Much might be learnt; and most of all at thine,
LONDON—thy hive the busiest, greatest, still
Attracting more and more. Let us stand by,
And note who passes. Here comes one, a Youth,
Glowing with pride, the pride of conscious power,
A Chatterton—in thought admired, caressed,
And crowned like Petrarch in the Capitol;
Ere long to die—to fall by his own hand,
And fester with the vilest. Here come two,
Less feverish, less exalted—soon to part,
A Garrick and a Johnson; Wealth and Fame
Awaiting one—even at the gate, Neglect
And Want the other. But what multitudes,

Urged by the love of change, and, like myself,
Adventurous, careless of to-morrow's fare,
Press on—tho' but a rill entering the Sea,
Entering and lost! Our task would never end.

Day glimmered and I went, a gentle breeze
Ruffling the LEMAN Lake. Wave after wave,
If such they might be called, dashed as in sport,
Not anger, with the pebbles on the beach
Making wild music, and far westward caught
The sun-beam—save where, as entranced, a skiff
Lay with its circular and dotted line,
Fishing in silence. When the heart is light
With hope, all pleases, nothing comes amiss;
And soon a passage-boat swept gaily by,
Laden with peasant-girls and fruits and flowers,

And many a chanticleer and partlet caged
For VEVAY'S market-place—a motley group
Seen thro' the silvery haze. But soon 'twas gone.
The shifting sail flapped idly for an instant,
Then bore them off.

I am not one of those
So dead to all things in this visible world,
So wondrously profound—as to move on
In the sweet light of heaven, like him of old *
(His name is justly in the Calendar)
Who thro' the day pursued this pleasant path
That winds beside the mirror of all beauty,
And, when at length he heard his fellow-pilgrims
Discoursing of the lake, asked where it was.
They marvelled, as they might; and so must all,
Seeing what now I saw; for now 'twas day,

* See Note.

And the bright Sun was in the firmament,
A thousand shadows of a thousand hues
Chequering the clear expanse. Awhile his Orb
Hung o'er thy trackless fields of snow, MONT BLANC,
Thy seas of ice and ice-built promontories,
That change their shapes for ever as in sport;
Then travelled onward and went down behind
The pine-clad heights of JURA, lighting up
The woodman's casement, and perchance his axe
Borne homeward thro' the forest in his hand;
And, in some deep and melancholy glen,
That dungeon-fortress never to be named,
Where, like a lion taken in the toils,
Toussaint breathed out his brave and generous spirit.
Ah, little did He think, who sent him there,
That he himself, then greatest among men,

Should in like manner be so soon conveyed
Across the ocean—to a rock so small
Amid the countless multitude of waves,
That ships have gone and sought it, and returned,
Saying it was not!

Still along the shore,
Among the trees I went for many a mile,
Where damsels sit and weave their fishing-nets,
Singing some national song by the way-side.
But now'twas dusk; and, journeying by the RHONE,
That there came down, a torrent from the Alps,
I entered where a key unlocks a kingdom,*
The mountains closing, and the road, the river
Filling the narrow passage. There I slept.

* St. Maurice.

II.

NIGHT was again descending, when my mule,
That all day long had climbed among the clouds,
Higher and higher still, as by a stair
Let down from Heaven itself, transporting me,
Stopped, to the joy of both, at that low door
So near the summit of the **GREAT ST. BERNARD**;
That door which ever on its hinges moved
To them that knocked, and nightly sends abroad
Ministering Spirits. Lying on the watch,
Two dogs of grave demeanour welcomed me,

All meekness, gentleness, tho' large of limb;
And a lay-brother of the Hospital,
Who, as we toiled below, had heard by fits
The distant echoes gaining on his ear,
Came and held fast my stirrup in his hand,
While I alighted..

Long could I have stood,
With a religious awe contemplating
That House, the highest in the Ancient World,
And placed there for the noblest purposes.
Twas a rude pile of simplest masonry,
With narrow windows and vast buttresses,
Built to endure the shocks of Time and Chance;
Yet shewing many a rent, as well it might,
Warred on for ever by the elements,

And in an evil day, nor long ago,
By violent men—when on the mountain-top
The French and Austrian banners met in conflict.

On the same rock beside it stood the church,
Reft of its cross, not of its sanctity;
The vesper-bell, for 'twas the vesper-hour,
Duly proclaiming thro' the wilderness,
"All ye who hear, whatever be your work,
Stop for an instant—move your lips in prayer!"
And, just beneath it, in that dreary dale,
If dale it might be called, so near to Heaven,
A little lake, where never fish leaped up,
Lay like a spot of ink amid the snow;
A star, the only one in that small sky,

On its dead surface glimmering. 'Twas a scene
Resembling nothing I had left behind,
As tho' all worldly ties were now dissolved;—
And, to incline the mind still more to thought,
To thought and sadness, on the eastern shore
Under a beetling cliff stood half in shadow
A lonely chapel destined for the dead,
For such as having wandered from their way,
Had perished miserably. Side by side,
Within they lie, a mournful company,
All in their shrouds, no earth to cover them;
Their features full of life yet motionless
In the broad day, nor soon to suffer change,
Tho' the barred windows, barred against the wolf,
Are always open!

But the *Bise* blew cold;

And, bidden to a spare but cheerful meal,

I sate among the holy brother-hood

At their long board. The fare indeed was such

As is prescribed on days of abstinence,

But might have pleased a nicer taste than mine;

And thro' the floor came up, an ancient matron

Serving unseen below; while from the roof

(The roof, the floor, the walls of native fir,))

A lamp hung flickering, such as loves to fling

Its partial light on Apostolic heads,

And sheds a grace on all. Theirs Time as yet

Had changed not. Some were almost in the prime

Nor was a brow o'ercast. Seen as I saw them,

Ranged round their ample hearth-stone in an hour

Of rest, they were as gay, as free from guile,
As children; answering, and at once, to all
The gentler impulses, to pleasure, mirth;
Mingling, at intervals, with rational talk
Music; and gathering news from them that came,
As of some other world. But when the storm
Rose, and the snow rolled on in ocean-billows,
When on his face the experienced traveller fell,
Sheltering his lips and nostrils with his hands,
Then all was changed; and, sallying with their pack
Into that blank of nature, they became
Unearthly beings. “Anselm, higher up
A dog howls loud and long, and now, observe,
Digs with his feet how eagerly! A man,
Dying or dead, lies buried underneath!

Let us to work! there is no time to lose!—

But who descends MONT VELAN? 'Tis La Croix.

Away, away! if not, alas, too late.

Homeward he drags an old man and a boy,

Faltering and falling, and but half awakened,

Asking to sleep again." Such their discourse.

Oft has a venerable roof received me;

ST. BRUNO's once *—where, when the winds were

hushed,

Nor from the cataract the voice came up, .

You might have heard the mole work underground,

So great the stillness of that place; none seen,

Save when from rock to rock a hermit crossed

By some rude bridge—or one at midnight tolled

* The Grande Chartreuse.

To matins, and white habits, issuing forth,
Glided along those aisles interminable,
All, all observant of the sacred law
Of Silence. Nor is that sequestered spot,
Once called ‘Sweet Waters,’ now ‘The Shady Vale,’*
To me unknown; that house so rich of old,
So courteous, and by two, that passed that way,†
Amply requited with immortal verse,
The Poet’s payment.

But, among them all,
None can with this compare, the dangerous seat
Of generous, active Virtue. What tho’ Frost
Reign everlastingly, and ice and snow
Thaw not, but gather—there is that within,

* Vallombrosa, formerly called Acqua Bella.

† Ariosto and Milton.

Which, where it comes, makes Summer; and, in
thought,

Oft am I sitting on the bench beneath
Their garden-plot, where all that vegetates,
Is but some scanty lettuce, to observe
Those from the South ascending, every step
As tho' it were their last—and instantly
Restored, renewed, advancing as with songs,
Soon as they see, turning a lofty crag,
That plain, that modest structure, promising
Bread to the hungry, to the weary rest.

III.

My mule refreshed—and, let the truth be told,
He was not of that vile, that scurvy race,
From sire to son levers of controversy,
But patient, diligent, and sure of foot,
Shunning the loose stone on the precipice,
Snorting suspicion while with sight, smell, touch,
Examining the wet and spungy moss,
And on his haunches sitting to slide down
The steep, the smooth—my mule refreshed, his bells
Gingled once more, the signal to depart,

And we set out in the grey light of dawn,
Descending rapidly—by waterfalls
Fast-frozen, and among huge blocks of ice
That in their long career had stopt mid-way.
At length, unchecked, unbidden, he stood still;
And all his bells were muffled. Then my Guide,
Lowering his voice, addressed me: “Thro’ this Chasm
On and say nothing—for a word, a breath,
Stirring the air, may loosen and bring down
A winter’s snow—enough to overwhelm
The horse and foot that, night and day, defiled
Along this path to conquer at MARENGO.
Well I remember how I met them here,
As the light died away, and how NAPOLEON,
Wrapt in his cloak—I could not be deceived—

Reined in his horse, and asked me, as I passed,
How far 'twas to ST. REMI. Where the rock
Juts forward, and the road, crumbling away,
Narrows almost to nothing at its base,
'Twas there; and down along the brink he led
To Victory!—DESAIX, who turned the scale,
Leaving his life-blood in that famous field,
(When the clouds break, we may discern the spot
In the blue haze,) sleeps, as you saw at dawn,
Just as you entered, in the Hospital-church."
So saying, for awhile he held his peace,
Awe-struck beneath that dreadful Canopy;
But soon the danger passed, launched forth again.

IV.

JORASSE was in his three-and-twentieth year;
Graceful and active as a stag just roused;
Gentle withal, and pleasant in his speech,
Yet seldom seen to smile. He had grown up
Among the Hunters of the Higher Alps;
Had caught their starts and fits of thoughtfulness,
Their haggard looks, and strange soliloquies,
Said to arise by those who dwell below,
From frequent dealings with the Mountain-Spirits.
But other ways had taught him better things;

And now he numbered, marching by my side,
The Savans, Princes, who with him had crossed
The icy tract, with him familiarly
Thro' the rough day and rougher night conversed
In many a chal t round the Peak of Terror,*
Round Tacul, Tour, Well-horn and Rosenlau;
Save when an Avalanche, at distance rolling
Its long, long thunders, held them mute with fear.
—But with what transport he recalled the hour
When to deserve, to win his blooming bride,
Madelaine of Annecy, to his feet he bound
The iron crampons, and, ascending, trod
The Upper Realms of Frost; then, by a cord
Let half-way down, entered a Grot star-bright,

* The Schrekhorn.

And gathered from above, below, around,
The pointed crystals!

Once, nor long before,
(Thus did his tongue run on, fast as his feet,
And with an eloquence that Nature gives
To all her children—breaking off by starts
Into the harsh and rude, oft as the Mule
Drew his displeasure,) once, nor long before,
Alone at day-break on the Mettenberg,
He slipped, he fell; and, through a fearful cleft
Gliding from ledge to ledge, from deep to deeper,
Went to the Under-world! Long-while he lay
Upon his rugged bed—then waked like one
Wishing to sleep again and sleep for ever!
For looking round, he saw or thought he saw

Innumerable branches of a Cavern,
Winding beneath that solid Crust of Ice;
With here and there a rent that shewed the stars!
What then, alas, was left him but to die?
What else in those immeasurable chambers,
Strewn with the bones of miserable men
Lost like himself? Yet must he wander on,
Till cold and hunger set his spirit free!
And, rising, he began his dreary round;
When hark, the noise as of some mighty River
Working its way to light! Back he withdrew,
But soon returned, and, fearless from despair,
Dashed down the dismal Channel; and all day,
If day could be where utter darkness was,
Travelled incessantly, the craggy roof

Just over-head, and the impetuous waves,
Nor broad nor deep, yet with a giant's strength
Lashing him on. At last the water slept
In a dead lake—at the third step he took,
Unfathomable—and the roof, that long
Had threatened, suddenly descending, lay
Flat on the surface. Statue-like he stood,
His journey ended; when a ray divine
Shot thro' his soul. Breathing a prayer to Her
Whose ears are never shut, the Blessed Virgin,
He plunged; he swam—and in an instant rose,
The barrier past, in light, in sunshine! Thro'
A smiling valley, full of cottages,
Glittering the river ran; and on the bank
The Young were dancing ('twas a festival-day)

All in their best attire. There first he saw
His Madelaine. In the crowd she stood to hear,
When all drew round, inquiring; and her face,
Seen behind all, and, varying, as he spoke,
With hope, and fear, and generous sympathy,
Subdued him. From that very hour he loved.

The tale was long, but coming to a close,
When his dark eyes flashed fire, and, stopping short,
He listened and looked up. I looked up too;
And twice there came a hiss that thro' me thrilled!
'Twas heard no more. A Chamois on the cliff
Had roused his fellows with that cry of fear,
And all were gone.

But now the thread was broken;

Love and its joys had vanished from his mind;
And he recounted his hair-breadth escapes,
When with his friend, Hubert of Bionnay,
(His ancient carbine from his shoulder slung,
His axe to hew a stair-case in the ice)
He tracked their footsteps. By a cloud surprised,
Upon a crag among the precipices,
Where the next step had hurled them fifty fathoms,
Oft had they stood, locked in each other's arms,
All the long night under a freezing sky,
Each guarding each the while from sleeping, falling.
Oh, 'twas a sport he loved dearer than life,
And only would with life itself relinquish!
“My sire, my grandsire died among these wilds.
As for myself,” he cried, and he held forth

His wallet in his hand, "this do I call
My winding-sheet—for I shall have no other!"

And he spoke truth. Within a little month
He lay among these awful solitudes,
("Twas on a Glacier—half-way up to Heaven)
Taking his final rest. Long did his wife,
Suckling her babe, her only one, look out
The way he went at parting, but he came not!
Long fear to close her eyes, lest in her sleep
(Such their belief) he should appear before her,
Frozen and ghastly pale, or crushed and bleeding,
To tell her where he lay, and supplicate
For the last rite! At length the dismal news
Came to her ears, and to her eyes his corse.

V.

Now the grey granite, starting thro' the snow,
Discovered many a variegated moss*
That to the pilgrim resting on his staff
Shadows out capes and islands; and ere long
Numberless flowers, such as disdain to live
In lower regions, and delighted drink
The clouds before they fall, flowers of all hues,
With their diminutive leaves covered the ground.
Twas then, that, turning by an ancient larch,
Shivered in two yet most majestical

* Lichen Geographicus.

With its long level branches, we observed
A human figure sitting on a stone
Far down by the way-side—just where the rock
Is riven asunder, and the Evil One
Has bridged the gulf, a wondrous monument
Built in one night, from which the flood beneath,
Raging along, all foam, is seen not heard,
And seen as motionless!

Nearer we drew,
And 'twas a woman young and delicate,
Wrapt in a russet cloak from head to foot,
Her eyes cast down, her cheek upon her hand,
In deepest thought. Young as she was, she wore
The matron-cap; and from her shape we judged,
As well we might, that it would not be long

Ere she became a mother. Pale she looked,
Yet cheerful; tho', methought, once, if not twice,
She wiped away a tear that would be coming;
And in those moments her small hat of straw,
Worn on one side, and garnished with a ribbon
Glittering with gold, but ill concealed a face
Not soon to be forgotten. Rising up
On our approach, she journeyed slowly on;
And my companion, long before we met,
Knew, and ran down to greet her.

She was born

(Such was her artless tale, told with fresh tears)
In VAL D'AOSTA; and an Alpine stream,
Leaping from crag to crag in its short course
To join the DORA, turned her father's mill.

There did she blossom till a Valaisan,
A townsman of MARTIGNY, won her heart,
Much to the old man's grief. Long he held out,
Unwilling to resign her; and at length,
When the third summer came, they stole a match
And fled. The act was sudden; and when far
Away, her spirit had misgivings. Then
She pictured to herself that aged face
Sickly and wan, in sorrow, not in anger;
And, when at last she heard his hour was near,
Went forth unseen, and, burdened as she was,
Crossed the high Alps on foot to ask forgiveness,
And hold him to her heart before he died.
Her task was done. She had fulfilled her wish,
And now was on her way, rejoicing, weeping.

A frame like hers had suffered; but her love
Was strong within her; and right on she went,
Fearing no ill. May all good Angels guard her!
And should I once again, as once I may,
Visit MARTIGNY, I will not forget
Thy hospitable roof, Marguerite De Tours;
Thy sign the golden sun. Heaven prosper Thee!

VI.

Who first beholds those everlasting clouds,
Seed-time and harvest, morning, noon and night,
Still where they were, steadfast, immovable;
Who first beholds the Alps—that mighty chain
Of Mountains, stretching on from east to west,
So massive, yet so shadowy, so ethereal,
As to belong rather to Heaven than Earth—
But instantly receives into his soul
A sense, a feeling that he loses not,

A something that informs him 'tis a moment
Whence he may date henceforward and for ever?

To me they seemed the barriers of a World,
Saying, Thus far, no farther! and as o'er
The level plain I travelled silently,
Nearing them more and more, day after day,
My wandering thoughts my only company,
And they before me still, oft as I looked,
A strange delight, mingled with fear, came o'er me,
A wonder as at things I had not heard of!
Oft as I looked, I felt as though it were
For the first time!

Great was the tumult there,

Deafening the din, when in barbaric pomp

The Carthaginian on his march to ROME
Entered their fastnesses. Trampling the snows,
The war-horse reared; and the towered elephant
Upturned his trunk into the murky sky,
Then tumbled headlong, swallowed up and lost,
He and his rider.

Now the scene is changed;
And o'er Mont Cenis, o'er the Simplon winds
A path of pleasure. Like a silver zone
Flung about carelessly, it shines afar,
Catching the eye in many a broken link,
In many a turn and traverse as it glides;
And oft above and oft below appears,
Seen o'er the wall by him who journeys up,
As though it were another, not the same,

Leading along he knows not whence or whither.
Yet thro' its fairy-course, go where it will,
The torrent stops it not, the rugged rock
Opens and lets it in; and on it runs,
Winning its easy way from clime to clime
Through glens locked up before.

Not such *my* path!

Mine but for those, who, like Jean Jaques, delight
In dizziness, gazing and shuddering on
Till fascination comes and the brain turns!
Mine, though I judge but from my ague-fits
Over the DRANCE, just where the Abbot fell,
The same as HANNIBAL's.

But now 'tis past,

That turbulent Chaos; and the promised land

Lies at my feet in all its loveliness!
To him who starts up from a terrible dream,
And lo, the sun is shining, and the lark
Singing aloud for joy, to him is not
Such sudden ravishment as now I feel
At the first glimpses of fair ITALY.

VII.

I LOVE to sail along the LARIAN Lake
Under the shore—though not to visit PLINY,
To catch him musing in his plane-tree walk,
Or fishing, as he might be, from his window:
And, to deal plainly, (may his Shade forgive me!)
Could I recall the ages past, and play
The fool with Time, I should perhaps reserve
My leisure for CATULLUS on *his* Lake,
Though to fare worse, or VIRGIL at his farm

A little farther on the way to MANTUA.

But such things cannot be. So I sit still,
And let the boatman shift his little sail,
His sail so forked and so swallow-like,
Well-pleased with all that comes. The morning-air
Plays on my cheek how gently, flinging round
A silvery gleam: and now the purple mists
Rise like a curtain; now the sun looks out,
Filling, o'erflowing with his glorious light
This noble amphitheatre of mountains;
And now appear as on a phosphor-sea
Numberless barks, from MILAN, from PAVIA;
Some sailing up, some down, and some at anchor,
Lading, unlading at that small port-town
Under the promontory—its tall tower

And long flat roofs, just such as Poussin drew,
Caught by a sun-beam slanting through a cloud;
A quay-like scene, glittering and full of life,
And doubled by reflection.

What delight,

After so long a sojourn in the desert,
To hear once more the sounds of cheerful labour!
—But in a clime like this where are they not?
Along the shores, among the hills 'tis now
The hey-day of the Vintage; all abroad,
But most the young and of the gentler sex,
Busy in gathering; all among the vines,
Some on the ladder, and some underneath,
Filling their baskets of green wicker-work,
While many a canzonet and frolic laugh

Come thro' the leaves; the vines in light festoons
From tree to tree, the trees in avenues,
And every avenue a covered walk
Hung with black clusters. 'Tis enough to make
The sad man merry, the benevolent one
Melt into tears—so general is the joy!
While up and down the cliffs, over the lake,
Wains oxen-drawn, and panniered mules are seen,
Laden with grapes, and dropping rosy wine. .

Here I received from thee, Filippo Mori,
One of those courtesies so sweet, so rare!
When, as I rambled through thy vineyard-ground
On the hill-side, thou sent'st thy little son,
Charged with a bunch almost as big as he,

To press it on the stranger.

May thy vats

O'overflow, and he, thy willing gift-bearer,

Live to become ere-long himself a giver;

And in due time, when thou art full of honor,

The staff of thine old age!

In a strange land

Such things, however trifling, reach the heart,

And through the heart the head, clearing away

The narrow notions that grow up at home,

And in their place grafting Good-Will to All.

At least I found it so, nor less at eve,

When, bidden as an English traveller,

('Twas by a little boat that gave me chase

With oar and sail, as homeward-bound I crossed

The bay of TRAMEZZINE,) right readily
I turned my prow and followed, landing soon
Where steps of purest marble met the wave;
Where, through the trellises and corridors,
Soft music came as from Armida's palace,
Breathing enchantment o'er the woods, the waters;
And through a bright pavilion, bright as day,
Forms such as hers were flitting, lost among
Such as of old in sober pomp swept by,
Such as adorn the triumphs and the feasts
Painted by Cagliari; where the world danced
Under the starry sky, while I looked on,
Admiring, listening, quaffing gramolata,
And reading in the eyes that sparkled round,
The thousand love-adventures written there.

Can I forget—no never, such a scene
So full of witchery. Night lingered still,
When, with a dying breeze, I left BELLAGGIO;
But the strain followed me; and still I saw
Thy smile, Angelica; and still I heard
Thy voice—once and again bidding adieu.

VIII.

THE song was one that I had heard before,
But where I knew not. It inclined to sadness;
And, turning round from the delicious fare
My landlord's little daughter Barbara,
Had from her apron just rolled out before me,
Figs and rock-melons—at the door I saw
Two boys of lively aspect. Peasant-like
They were, and poorly clad, but not unskilled;
With their small voices and an old guitar
Winning their mazy progress to my heart

In that, the only universal language.

But soon they changed the measure, entering on

A pleasant dialogue of sweet and sour,

A war of words, and waged with looks and gestures,

Between Trappanti and his ancient dame,

Mona Lucilia. To and fro it went;

While many a titter on the stairs was heard,

And Barbara's among them.

When 'twas done,

Their dark eyes flashed no longer, yet were speaking

More than enough to serve them. Far or near,

Few let them pass unnoticed; and there was not

A mother round about for many a league,

But could repeat their story. Twins they were,

And orphans, as I learnt, cast on the world;

Their parents lost in the old ferry-boat
That, three years since, last Martinmas, went down
Crossing the rough BENACUS.*

May they live

Blameless and happy—rich they cannot be,
Like him who, in the days of Minstrelsy,
Came in a beggar's weeds to Petrarch's door,
Crying without, “Give me a lay to sing!”
And soon in silk (such then the power of song)
Returned to thank him; or like him, way-worn
And lost, who, by the foaming ADIGÈ
Descending from the TYROL, as Night fell,
Knocked at a City-gate near the hill-foot,
The gate that bore so long, sculptured in stone,
An eagle on a ladder, and at once

* Lago di Garda.

Found welcome—nightly in the bannered hall
Tuning his harp to tales of Chivalry
Before the great MASTINO, and his guests,*
The three-and-twenty, by some adverse fortune,
By war or treason or domestic malice,
Reft of their kingly crowns, reft of their all,
And living on his bounty.

But who now

Enters the chamber, flourishing a scroll
In his right hand, his left at every step
Brushing the floor with what was once a hat
Of ceremony. Gliding on, he comes,
Slip-shod, ungartered; his long suit of black
Dingy and thread-bare, though renewed in patches
Till it has almost ceased to be the old one.

* See Note.

At length arrived, and with a shrug that pleads.
“ ‘Tis my necessity!” he stops and speaks,
Screwing a smile into his dinnerless face.

“ I am a Poet, Signor:—give me leave
To bid you welcome. Tho’ you shrink from notice,
The splendour of your name has gone before you;
And ITALY from sea to sea rejoices,
As well indeed she may! But I transgress.
I too have known the weight of Praise, and ought
To spare another.”

Saying so, he laid
His sonnet, an impromptu, on my table,
(If his, then Petrarch must have stolen it from him)
And bowed and left me; in his hollow hand

Receiving my small tribute, a zecchino,
Unconsciously, as doctors do their fees.

My omelet, and a flagon of hill-wine,
“The very best in BERGAMO!” had long
Fled from all eyes; or, like the young Gil Blas
De Santillane, I had perhaps been seen
Bartering my bread and salt for empty praise.

IX.

AM I in ITALY? Is this the Mincius?

Are those the ancient turrets of Verona?

And shall I sup where Juliet at the Masque

Saw her loved Montague, and now sleeps by him?

Such questions hourly do I ask myself;

And not a finger-post by the road-side

“To Mantua”—“To Ferrara”—but excites

Surprise, and doubt, and self-congratulation.

O ITALY, how beautiful thou art!

Yet I could weep—for thou art lying, alas,
Low in the dust; and they who come, admire thee
As we admire the beautiful in death.

Thine was a dangerous gift, the gift of Beauty.
Would thou hadst less, or wert as once thou wast,
Inspiring awe in those who now enslave thee!

—But why despair? Twice hast thou lived already;
Twice shone among the nations of the world,
As the sun shines among the lesser lights
Of heaven; and shalt again. The hour shall come,
When they who think to bind the ethereal spirit,
Who, like the eagle cowering o'er his prey,
Watch with quick eye, and strike and strike again
If but a sinew vibrate, shall confess
Their wisdom folly. Even now the flame

Bursts forth where once it burnt so gloriously,
And, dying, left a splendour like the day,
That like the day diffused itself, and still
Blesses the earth—the light of genius, virtue,
Greatness in thought and act, contempt of death,
God-like example. Echoes that have slept
Since ATHENS, LACEDÆMON, were Themselves,
Since men invoked ‘ By Those in MARATHON ! ’
Awake along the ÆGEAN; and the dead,
They of that sacred shore, have heard the call,
And thro’ the ranks, from wing to wing, are seen
Moving as once they were—instead of rage
Breathing deliberate valour.

X.

“ IN this neglected mirror (the broad frame
Of massive silver serves to testify
That many a noble matron of the house
Has sate before it) once, alas, was seen
What led to many sorrows. From that time
The bat came hither for a sleeping place;
And he, who cursed another in his heart,
Said, “ Be thy dwelling thro’ the day, the night,
Shunned like COLL’ALTO.” Twas in that old Castle,
Which flanks the cliff with its grey battlements

Flung here and there, and, like an eagle's nest,
Hangs in the TREVISAN, that thus the Steward,
Shaking his locks, the few that Time had left him,
Addressed me, as we entered what was called
' My Lady's Chamber.' On the walls, the chairs,
Much yet remained of the rich tapestry;
Much of the adventures of Sir Lancelot
In the green glades of some enchanted forest.
The toilet-table was of massive silver,
Florentine Art, when Florence was renowned;
A gay confusion of the elements,
Dolphins and boys, and shells and fruits and flowers:
And from the ceiling, in his gilded cage,
Hung a small bird of curious workmanship,
That, when his Mistress bade him, would unfold .

(So said at least the babbling Dame, Tradition)

His emerald-wings, and sing and sing again

The song that pleased her. While I stood and looked,

A gleam of day yet lingering in the West,

The Steward went on.

“ She had ('tis now long since)

A gentle serving-maid, the fair CRISTINA,

Fair as a lily, and as spotless too;

None so admired, beloved. They had grown up

As play-fellows; and some there were, who said,

Some who knew much, discoursing of Cristina,

“ She is not what she seems.” When unrequired,

She would steal forth; her custom, her delight,

To wander thro' and thro' an ancient grove

Self-planted half-way down, losing herself

Like one in love with sadness; and her veil
And vesture white, seen ever in that place,
Ever as surely as the hours came round,
Among those reverend trees, gave her below
The name of The White Lady. But the day
Is gone, and I delay you.

In that chair
The Countess, as it might be now, was sitting,
Her gentle serving-maid, the fair CRISTINA,
Combing her golden hair; and, thro' this door
The Count, her lord, was hastening, called away
By letters of great urgency to VENICE;
When in the glass she saw, as she believed,
("Twas an illusion of the Evil Spirit—
Some say he came and crossed it at the instant)

A smile, a glance at parting, given and answered,
That turned her blood to gall. That very night
The deed was done. That night, ere yet the Moon
Was up on Monte Calvo, and the wolf
Baying as still he does (oft do I hear him,
An hour and more by the old turret-clock)
They led her forth, the unhappy lost CRISTINA,
Helping her down in her distress to die.
She was walled up within the Castle-wall.
The wall itself was hollowed to receive her;
Then closed again, and done to line and rule.
Would you descend and see it?—Tis far down;
And many a stair is gone. Tis in a vault
Under the Chapel: and there nightly now,
As in the narrow niche, when smooth and fair,

And as tho' nothing had been done or thought of,
The stone-work rose before her—till the light
Glimmered and went—there, nightly, at that hour
(You smile, and would it were an idle story!
Would we could say so!) at that hour she stands
Shuddering—her eyes uplifted, and her hands
Joined as in prayer; then, like a Blessed Soul
Bursting the tomb, springs forward, and away
Flies o'er the woods, the mountains. Issuing forth,
The hunter meets her in his hunting track;
The shepherd on the heath, starting, exclaims
(For still she bears the name she bore of old)
“ ‘Tis the White Lady!”

XI.

THERE is a glorious City in the Sea.

The Sea is in the broad, the narrow streets,
Ebbing and flowing; and the salt sea-weed
Clings to the marble of her palaces.

No track of men, no foot-steps to and fro,
Lead to her gates. The path lies o'er the Sea,
Invisible; and from the land we went,
As to a floating City—steering in,
And gliding up her streets as in a dream,
So smoothly, silently—by many a dome
Mosque-like, and many a stately portico,

The statues ranged along an azure sky;
By many a pile in more than Eastern splendour,
Of old the residence of merchant-kings;
The fronts of some, tho' Time had shattered them,
Still glowing with the richest hues of art,
As though the wealth within them had run o'er.

Thither I came, in the great passage-boat,
From PADUA, where the stars are, night by night,
Watched from the top of an old dungeon-tower,
Whence blood ran once, the tower of Ezzelino—
Not as he watched them, when he read his fate
And shuddered. But of him I thought not then,
Him or his horoscope; far, far from me
The forms of Guilt and Fear; though some were there,
Sitting among us round the cabin-board,

Some who, like him, had cried, "Spill blood enough!"
And could shake long at shadows. They had played
Their parts at PADUA, and were now returning;
A vagrant crew, and careless of to-morrow,
Careless and full of mirth. Who, in that quaver,
Sings "Caro, Caro!"—Tis the Prima Donna,
And to her monkey, smiling in his face.
Who, as transported, cries, "Bravo! Ancora!"
Tis a grave personage, an old macaw,
Perched on her shoulder. But mark him who leaps
Ashore, and with a shout urges along
The lagging mules; then runs and climbs a tree
That with its branches overhangs the stream,
And, like an acorn, drops on deck again.
Tis he who speaks not, stirs not, but we laugh;
That child of fun and frolic, Arlecchino.

And mark their Poet—with what emphasis
He prompts the young Soubrette, conning her part!
Her tongue plays truant, and he raps his box,
And prompts again; for ever looking round
As if in search of subjects for his wit,
His satire; and as often whispering
Things, tho' unheard, not unimaginable.

Had I thy pencil, CR - BBE (when thou hast done,
Late may it be . . . it will, like Prospero's staff,
Be buried fifty fathoms in the earth)
I would portray the Italian—Now I cannot.
Subtle, discerning, eloquent, the slave
Of Love, of Hate, for ever in extremes;
Gentle when unprovoked, easily won,
But quick in quarrel—thro' a thousand shades

His spirit flits, cameleon-like; and mocks
The eye of the observer.

Gliding on,
At length we leave the river for the sea.

At length a voice aloft proclaims "Venezia!"

And, as called forth, it comes. A few in fear,

Flying away from him whose boast it was,*

That the grass grew not where his horse had trod,

Gave birth to VENICE. Like the water-fowl,

They built their nests among the ocean-waves;

And, where the sands were shifting, as the wind

Blew from the north, the south; where they that came,

Had to make sure the ground they stood upon,

Rose, like an exhalation, from the deep,

A vast Metropolis, with glittering spires,

With theatres, basilicas adorned;

* Attila.

A scene of light and glory, a dominion,
That has endured the longest ameng men.

And whence the talisman, by which she rose,
Towering? Twas found there in the barren sea.
Want led to Enterprise; and, far or near,
Who met not the Venetian?—now in Cairo;
Ere yet the Cafila came, listening to hear
Its bells approaching from the Red-Sea coast;
Now on the Euxine, on the Sea of Azoph,
In converse with the Persian, with the Russ,
The Tartar; on his lowly deck receiving
Pearls from the gulf of Ormus, gems from Bagdad;
Eyes brighter yet, that shed the light of love,
From Georgia, from Circassia. Wandering round,
When in the rich bazar he saw, displayed,

Treasures from unknown climes, away he went,
And, travelling slowly upward, drew ere-long
From the well-head, supplying all below;
Making the Imperial City of the East,
Herself, his tributary.

If we turn

To the black forests of the Rhine, the Danube,
Where o'er the narrow glen the castle hangs,
And, like the wolf that hangered at his door,
The baron lived by rapine—there we meet,
In warlike guise, the Caravan from VENICE;
When on its march, now lost and now emerging,
A glittering file, the trumpet heard, the scout
Sent and recalled—but at a city-gate
All gaiety, and looked for ere it comes;
Winning its way with all that can attract,

Cages, whence every wild cry of the desert,
Jugglers, stage-dancers. Well might Charlemain,
And his brave peers, each with his visor up,
On their long lances lean and gaze awhile,
When the Venetian to their eyes disclosed
The Wonders of the East! Well might they then
Sigh for new Conquests!

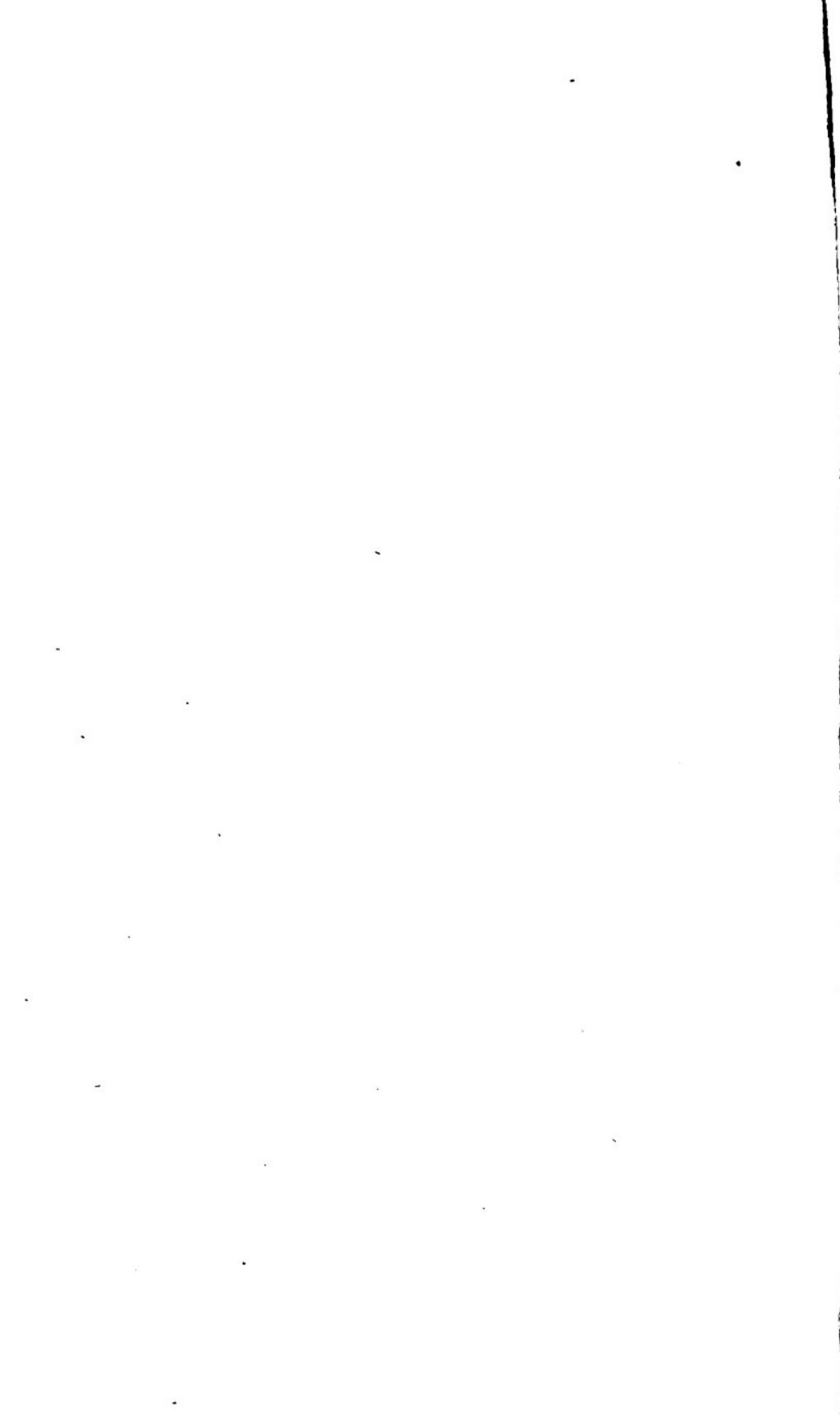
Thus did VENICE rise,
Thus flourish, till the unwelcome tidings came,
That in the Tagus had arrived a fleet
From India, from the region of the Sun,
Fragrant with spices—that a way was found,
A channel opened, and the golden stream
Turned to enrich another. Then she felt
Her strength departing, and at last she fell,
Fell in an instant, blotted out and razed;

She who had stood yet longer than the longest
Of the Four Kingdoms—who, as in an Ark,
Had floated down, amid a thousand wrecks,
Uninjured, from the Old World to the New,
From the last trace of civilized life—to where
Light shone again, and with unclouded splendour.

Thro' many an age in the mid-sea She dwelt,
From her retreat calmly contemplating
The changes of the Earth, herself unchanged.
Before her passed, as in an awful dream,
The mightiest of the mighty. What are these,
Clothed in their purple? O'er the globe they fling
Their monstrous shadows; and, while yet we speak,
Phantom-like, vanish with a dreadful scream!
What—but the last that styled themselves the Cæsars?

And who in long array (look where they come;
Their gestures menacing so far and wide)
Wear the green turban and the heron's plume?
Who—but the Caliphs? followed fast by shapes
As new and strange—Emperor, and King, and Czar,
And Soldan, each, with a gigantic stride,
Trampling on all the flourishing works of peace
To make his greatness greater, and inscribe
His name in blood—some, men of steel, steel-clad;
Others, nor long, alas, the interval,
In light and gay attire, with brow serene
Wielding Jove's thunder, scattering sulphurous fire
Mingled with darkness; and, among the rest,
Lo, one by one, passing continually,
Those who assume a sway beyond them all;

**Men grey with age, each in a triple crown,
And in his tremulous hands grasping the keys
That can alone, as he would signify,
Unlock Heaven's gate.**



XII.

He who is on his travels and loves ease,
Ease and companionship, should hire a lacquey,
Such as thou wert, Luigi. Thee I found,
Playing at MORA on the cabin-roof
With Pulcinella—crying, as in anger,
“ Tre! Quattro! Cinque!”—”Tis a game to strike
Fire from the coldest heart. What then from thine?
And, ere the twentieth throw, I had resolved,
Won by thy looks. Thou wert an honest lad;

Wert generous, grateful, not without ambition.
Had it depended on thy will and pleasure,
Thou wouldest have numbered in thy family
At least six Doges and twelve Procurators.
But that was not to be. In thee I saw
The last of a long line of Carbonari,
Who in their forest, for three hundred years,
Had lived and laboured, cutting, charring wood;
Discovering where they were, to those astray,
By the re-echoing stroke, the crash, the fall,
Or the blue wreath that travelled slowly up
Into the sky. Thy nobler destinies
Led thee away to justle in the crowd;
And there I found thee—by thy own prescription
Crossing the sea to try once more a change

Of air and diet, landing and as gaily,
Near the Dogana—on the Great Canal,
As tho' thou knewest where to dine and sleep.

First didst thou practise Patience in BOLOGNA,
Serving behind a Cardinal's gouty chair,
Laughing at jests that were no laughing matter;
Then teach the Art to others in FERRARA
—At the Three Moors—as Guide, as Cicerone—
Dealing out largely in exchange for pence
Thy scraps of Knowledge—thro' the grassy street
Leading, explaining—pointing to the bars
Of TASSO's dungeon, and the latin verse,
Graven in the stone, that yet denotes the door
Of ARIOSTO.

Many a year is gone
Since on the RHINE we parted; yet, methinks,
I can recall thee to the life, Luigi;
In our long journey ever by my side,
O'er rough and smooth, o'er apennine, maremma;
Thy locks jet-black, and clustering round a face
Open as day and full of manly daring.
Thou hadst a hand, a heart for all that came,
Herdsman or pedler, monk or muleteer;
And few there were, that met thee not with smiles.
Mishap passed o'er thee like a summer-cloud.
Cares thou hadst none; and they, who stood to
hear thee,
Caught the infection and forgot their own.
Nature conceived thee in her merriest mood,

Her happiest—not a speck was in the sky;
And at thy birth the cricket chirped, Luigi,
Thine a perpetual voice—at every turn
A larum to the echo. In a clime,
Where all the world was gay, thou wert the gayest,
And, like a babe, hushed only by thy slumbers;
Up hill and down, morning and noon and night,
Singing or talking; singing to thyself
When none gave ear, but to the listener talking.

XIII.

OVER how many tracts, vast, measureless,
Nothing, from day to day, from year to year,
Passes, save now and then a cloud, a meteor,
A famished eagle ranging for his prey;
While on this spot of earth, the work of man,
How much has been transacted! Emperors, Popes,
Warriors, from far and wide, laden with spoil,
Landing, have here performed their several parts,
Then left the stage to others. Not a stone
In the broad pavement, but to him who has

An eye, an ear for the Inanimate World,
Tells of Past Ages.

In that temple-porch,
(The brass is gone, the porphyry remains,) Did BARBAROSSA fling his mantle off,
And, kneeling, on his neck receive the foot
Of the proud Pontiff—thus at last consoled
For flight, disguise, and many an aguish shake
On his stone-pillow.* In that temple-porch,
Old as he was, so near his hundredth year,
And blind—his eyes put out—did DANDOLO
Stand forth, displaying on his ducal crown
The cross just then assumed at the high altar.
There did he stand, erect, invincible,
Tho' wan his cheeks, and wet with many tears,

* See Note.

For in his prayers he had been weeping much;
And now the pilgrims and the people wept
With admiration, saying in their hearts,
“ Surely those aged limbs have need of rest.”
—There did he stand, with his old armour on;
Ere he set sail, five hundred gallant ships,
Their lofty sides hung with emblazoned shields,
Following his track to Glory. He returned not;
But of his trophies four arrived ere-long,
Snatched from destruction—the four steeds divine,
That strike the ground, resounding with their feet,
And from their nostrils snort ethereal flame
Over that very portal—in the place
Where in an after-time PETRARCH was seen
Sitting beside the Doge; on his right hand,

Amid the ladies of the Court of VENICE,
Their beauty shaded from the setting sun
By many-coloured hangings; while, beneath,
Knights of all nations, some from merry England,
Their lances in the rest, charged for the prize.

Here, among other pageants, and how oft
It came, as if returning to console
The least, instruct the greatest, did the Doge,
Himself, go round, borne thro' the gazing crowd,
Once in a chair of state, once on his bier.
They were his first appearance, and his last.

The sea, that emblem of uncertainty,
Changed not so fast for many and many an age,

As this small spot. To-day 'twas full of maskers;
And lo, the madness of the Carnival,
The monk, the nun, the holy legate masked!
To-morrow came the scaffold and the heads-man;
And he died there by torch-light, bound and gagged,
Whose name and crime they knew not. Underneath,
Where the Archangel, turning with the wind,
Blesses the City from the topmost-tower,
His arms extended—there continually
Two phantom-shapes were sitting, side by side,
Or up, and, as in sport, chasing each other;
Horror and Mirth. Both vanished in one hour!
But Ocean only, when again he claims
His ancient rule, shall wash away their footsteps.

Enter the Palace by the marble stairs
Down which the grizaly head of old FALIERO
Rolled from the block. Pass onward through the
Chamber,
Where, among all drawn in their ducal robes,
But one is wanting—where, thrown off in heat,
A short inscription on the Doge's chair
Led to another on the wall yet shorter;
And thou wilt track them—wilt from halls of state,
Where kings have feasted, and the festal song
Rung through the fretted roof, cedar and gold,
Step into darkness; and be told, 'Twas here,
Trusting, deceived, assembled but to die,
To take a long embrace and part again,
CARRARA and his valiant sons were strangled;

He first,—then they, whose only crime had been
Struggling to save their Father.—Thro' that door,
So soon to cry, smiting his brow, "I'm lost!" "
Was shewn, and with all courtesy, all honor,
The great and noble captain, CARMAGNOLA.—
That deep descent (thou canst not yet discern
Aught as it is) leads to the dripping vaults
Under the flood, where light and warmth came never!
Leads to a covered Bridge, the Bridge of Sighs;
And to that fatal closet at the foot,
Lurking for prey, which, when a victim entered,
Grew less and less, contracting to a span;
An iron-door, urged onward by a screw,
Forcing out life.—But let us to the roof,
And, when thou hast surveyed the sea, the land,

Visit the narrow cells that cluster there,
As in a place of tombs. They had their tenants,
And each supplied with sufferings of his own.

There burning suns beat unrelentingly,
Turning all things to dust, and scorching up
The brain, till Reason fled, and the wild yell
And wilder laugh, burst out on every side,
Answering each other as in mockery!

—Few Houses of the size were better filled;
Though many came and left it in an hour.
“ Most nights,” so said the good old Nicolo,
(For three-and-thirty years his uncle kept
The water-gate below, but seldom spoke,
Though much was on his mind,) most nights arrived
The prison-boat, that boat with many oars,

And bore away to the Canal ORFANO,
The drowning-place, where never net was thrown,
Summer or Winter, death the penalty;
And where a secret once deposited,
Lay till the waters should give up their dead."

Yet what so gay as VENICE? Every gale
Breathed heavenly music! and who flocked not
thither
To celebrate her Nuptials with the Sea;
To wear the mask, and mingle in the crowd
With Greek, Armenian, Persian—night and day
(There, and there only, did the hour stand still,)
Pursuing through her thousand labyrinths
The Enchantress Pleasure; realizing dreams

The earliest, happiest—for a tale to catch
Credulous ears, and hold young hearts in chains,
Had only to begin, ‘There lived in VENICE’—

‘ Who were the Six we supped with Yesternight?’*
‘ Kings, one and all! Thou couldst not but remark
The style and manner of the Six that served them.’

‘ Who answered me justnow? Who, when I said,
“ ‘Tis nine,” turned round and said so solemnly,
“ Signor, he died at nine!”—‘ Twas the Armenian;
The mask that follows thee, go where thou wilt.’

‘ But who stands there, alone among them all?’
‘ The Cypriot. Ministers from foreign Courts

* See Note.

Beset his doors, long ere his hour of rising;
His the Great Secret! Not the golden house
Of Nero, or those fabled in the East,
As wrought by magic, half so rich as his!
Two dogs, coal-black, in collars of pure gold,
Walk in his footsteps—Who but his familiars?
He casts no shadow—nor is seen to smile!'

Such their discourse. Assembling in St. Mark's,
All Nations met as on enchanted ground!

What tho' a strange, mysterious Power was there,
Moving throughout, subtle, invisible,
And universal as the air they breathed;
A Power that never slumbered, never pardoned,

All eye, all ear, no where and every where,
Entering the closet and the sanctuary,
No place of refuge for the Doge himself;
Most present when least thought of—nothing dropt
In secret, when the heart was on the lips,
Nothing in feverish sleep, but instantly
Observed and judged—a Power, that if but glanced at
In casual converse, be it where it might,
The speaker lowered at once his eyes, his voice,
And pointed upward as to God in Heaven—
What tho' that Power was there, he who lived thus,
Pursuing Pleasure, lived as if it were not.
But let him in the midnight-air indulge
A word, a thought against the laws of VENICE,
And in that hour he vanished from the earth!

XIV.

NIGHT came, and we embarked; but instantly,
Tho' she had stept on board so light of foot,
Laughing she knew not why as sure of pleasure,
She fell asleep, she slept upon my arm.

From time to time I waked her; but the boat
Rocked her to sleep again.

The moon was up,
But broken by a cloud. The wind was hushed,
And the sea mirror-like. A single zephyr

Played with her tresses, and drew more and more
Her veil across her bosom.

Long I lay
Contemplating that face so beautiful,
That rosy mouth, that cheek dimpled with smiles,
That neck but half-concealed, whiter than snow.
'Twas the sweet slumber of her early age.
I looked and looked, and felt a flush of joy
I would express but cannot.

Oft I wished
Gently - - by stealth - - to drop asleep myself,
And to incline yet lower that sleep might come;
Oft closed my eyes as in forgetfulness.
'Twas all in vain. Love would not let me rest.

But how delightful when at length she waked!

When, her light hair adjusting, and her veil
So rudely scattered, she resumed her place
Beside me; and, as gaily as before,
Sitting unconsciously nearer and nearer,
Poured out her innocent mind!

So, nor long since,
Sung a Venetian: and his lay of love,
Dangerous and sweet, charmed VENICE. As for me
(Less fortunate, if Love be Happiness)
No curtain drawn, no pulse beating alarm,
I went alone under the silent moon;
Thy place, ST. MARK, thy churches, palaces,
Glittering and frost-like, and, as day drew on,
Melting away, an emblem of themselves.

The slave-quay passed, adventurer-like I
launched

Into the deep, ere-long discovering
Isles such as cluster in the Southern seas,
All verdure. Every where, from bush and brake,
The musky odour of the serpents came;
Their slimy track across the woodman's path
Bright in the moonshine: and, as round I went,
Dreaming of Greece, whither the waves were gliding,
I listened to the venerable pines
Then in close converse; and, if right I guessed,
Delivering many a message to the winds
In secret, for their kindred on Mount Ida.

Nor when again in VENICE, when again
In that strange place, so stirring and so still,
Where nothing comes to drown the human voice
But music, or the dashing of the tide,

Ceased I to wander. Now a Jessica
Sung to her lute, her signal as she sate
At her half-open window. Then, methought,
A serenade broke silence, breathing hope
Thro' walls of stone, and torturing the proud heart
Of some Priuli. Once, we could not err,
(It was before an old Palladian house,
As between night and day we floated by)
A Gondolier lay singing; and he sung,
As in the time when VENICE was herself,
Of Tancred and Erminia. On our oars
We rested; and the verse was verse divine!
We could not err—Perhaps he was the last—
For none took up the strain, none answered him;
And when he ceased, he left upon my ear
A something like the dying voice of VENICE!

The moon went down; and nothing now was seen
Save here and there the lamp of a Madonna,
Glimmering—or heard, but when he spoke, who
stood
Over the lantern at the prow and cried,
Turning the corner of some reverend pile,
Some school or hospital of old renown,
Tho' haply none were coming, none were near,
‘Hasten or slacken.’*

But at length Night fled;
And with her fled, scattering, the sons of Pleasure.
Star after star shot by, or, meteor-like,
Crossed me and vanished—lost at once among
Those hundred Isles that tower majestically,
That rise abruptly from the water-mark,
Not with rough crag, but marble, and the work

* Premi o stali.

Of noblest architects. I lingered still;
Nor struck my threshold, till the hour was come
And past, when, flitting home in the grey light,
The young BIANCA found her father's door,
That door so often with a trembling hand,
So often—then so lately left ajar,
Shut; and, all terror, all perplexity,
Now by her lover urged, now by her love,
Fled o'er the waters to return no more.

XV.

It was St. Mary's Eve, and all poured forth
As to some grand solemnity. The fisher
Came from his islet, bringing o'er the waves
His wife and little one; the husbandman
From the Firm Land, along the Po, the Brenta,
Crowding the common ferry. All arrived;
And in his straw the prisoner turned and listened,
So great the stir in VENICE. Old and young
Thronged her three hundred bridges; the grave Turk
In his white turban, and the cozening Jew,

In his red hat and thread-bare gaberdine,
Hurrying along. For, as the custom was,
The noblest sons and daughters of the state,
They of Patrician birth, the Flower of Venice,
Whose names are written in the Book of Gold,
Were on that day to solemnize their nuptials.

At noon a distant murmur through the crowd,
Rising and rolling on, announced their coming;
And never from the first was to be seen
Such splendour or such beauty. Two and two,
(The richest tapestry unrolled before them)
First came the Brides in all their loveliness;
Each in her veil, and by two bride-maids followed,
Only less lovely, who behind her bore

The precious caskets that within contained
The dowry and the presents. On she moved,
Her eyes cast down, and holding in her hand
A fan, that gently waved, of ostrich feathers.
Her veil, transparent as the gossamer,
Fell from beneath a starry diadem;
And on her dazzling neck a jewel shone,
Ruby or diamond or dark amethyst;
A jewelled chain, in many a winding wreath,
Wreathing her gold brocade.

Before the Church,

That venerable Pile on the sea-brink,
Another train they met, no strangers to them,
Brothers to some and to the rest still dearer;
Each in his hand bearing his cap and plume,

And, as he walked, with modest dignity
Folding his scarlet mantle, his tabarro.

They join, they enter in, and, up the aisle
Led by the full-voiced choir in bright procession,
Range round the altar. In his vestments there
The Patriarch stands; and, while the anthem flows,
Who can look on unmoved—mothers in secret
Rejoicing in the beauty of their daughters,
Sons in the thought of making them their own;
And they—arrayed in youth and innocence,
Their beauty heightened by their hopes and fears.

At length the rite is ending. All fall down
In earnest prayer, all of all ranks together;

And, stretching out his hands, the holy man
Proceeds to give the general benediction;
When hark, a din of voices from without,
And shrieks and groans and outcries as in battle!
And lo, the door is burst, the curtain rent,
And armed ruffians, robbers from the deep,
Savage, uncouth, led on by Barbarigo,
And his six brothers in their coats of steel,
Are standing on the threshold! Statue-like,
Awhile they gaze on the fallen multitude,
Each with his sabre up, in act to strike;
Then, as at once recovering from the spell,
Rush forward to the altar, and as soon
Are gone again—amid no clash of arms
Bearing away the maidens and the treasures.

Where are they now?—ploughing the distant
waves,
Their sails all set, and they upon the deck
Standing triumphant. To the East they go,
Steering for ISTRIA; their accursed barks
(Well are they known, the galliot and the galley,)
Freighted with all that gives to life its value!
The richest argosies were poor to them!

Now might you see the matrons running wild
Along the beach; the men half armed and arming,
One with a shield, one with a casque and spear;
One with an axe hewing the mooring-chain
Of some old pinnace. Not a raft, a plank,
But on that day was drifting. In an hour

Half VENICE was afloat. But long before,
Frantic with grief and scorning all control,
The Youths were gone in a light brigantine
Lying at anchor near the Arsenal;
Each having sworn, and by the holy rood,
To slay or to be slain.

And from the tower
The watchman gives the signal. In the East
A ship is seen, and making for the Port;
Her flag St. Mark's.—And now she turns the point,
Over the waters like a sea-bird flying!
Ha, 'tis the same, 'tis theirs! From stern to prow
Hung with green boughs, she comes—she comes,
restoring
All that was lost.

Coasting, with narrow search,
FRIULI—like a tiger in his spring
They had surprised the Corsairs where they lay
Sharing the spoil in blind security
And casting lots—had slain them, one and all,
All to the last, and flung them far and wide
Into the sea, their proper element;
Him first, as first in rank, whose name so long
Had hushed the babes of **VENICE**, and who yet,
Breathing a little, in his look retained
The fierceness of his soul.

Thus were the Brides
Lost and recovered; and what now remained
But to give Thanks? Twelve breast-plates and
twelve crowns,

Flaming with gems and gold; the votive offerings
Of the young victors to their Patron-Saint,
Vowed on the field of battle, were ere-long
Laid at his feet; and to preserve for ever
The memory of a day so full of change,
From joy to grief, from grief to joy again,
Through many an age, as oft as it came round,
'Twas held religiously with all observance.
The Doge resigned his crimson for pure ermine;
And through the city in a stately barge
Of gold, were borne, with songs and symphonies,
Twelve ladies young and noble. Clad they were
In bridal white with bridal ornaments,
Each in her glittering veil; and on the deck,
As on a burnished throne, they glided by;

No window or balcony but adorned
With hangings of rich texture, not a roof
But covered with beholders, and the air
Vocal with joy. Onward they went, the oars
Moving in concert with the harmony,
Thro' the Rialto to the Ducal Palace,
And at a banquet there, served with due honor,
Sate representing, in the eyes of all,
Eyes not unwet, I ween, with grateful tears,
Their lovely ancestors, the Brides of VENICE.

XVI.

LE^T us lift up the curtain, and observe
What passes in that chamber. Now a sigh,
And now a groan is heard. Then all is still.
Twenty are sitting as in judgment there;
Men who have served their country, and grown grey
In governments and distant embassies,
Men eminent alike in war and peace;
Such as in effigy shall long adorn
The walls of Venice—to shew what she has been!
Their garb is black, and black the arras is,

And sad the general aspect. Yet their looks
Are calm, are cheerful; nothing there like grief,
Nothing or harsh, or cruel. Still that noise,
That low and dismal moaning.

Half withdrawn,
A little to the left, sits one in crimson,
A venerable man, fourscore and upward.
Cold drops of sweat stand on his furrowed brow.
His hands are clenched; his eyes half shut and
glazed;
His shrunk and withered limbs rigid as marble.
'Tis FOSCARÍ, the Doge. And there is one,
A young man, lying at his feet, stretched out
In torture. 'Tis his son, his only one;
'Tis GIACOMO, the blessing of his age,

(Say, has he lived for this?) accused of murder,

The murder of the Senator Donato.

Last night the proofs, if proofs they are, were dropt

Into the lion's mouth, the mouth of brass,

That gapes and gorges; and the Doge himself,

("Tis not the first time he has filled this office,)

Must sit and look on a beloved Son

Suffering the Question.

"Twice, to die in peace,

To save a falling house, and turn the hearts

Of his fell Adversaries, those who now,

Like hell-hounds in full cry, are running down

His last of four, twice did he ask their leave

To lay aside the Crown, and they refused him,

An oath exacting, never more to ask it;

**And there he sits, a spectacle of woe,
By them, his rivals in the State, compelled,
Such the refinement of their cruelty,
To keep the place he sighed for.**

Once again

**The screw is turned; and, as it turns, the Son
Looks up, and in a faint and broken accent,
Murmurs "My Father!" The old man shrinks back,
And in his mantle muffles up his face.
"Art thou not guilty?" says a voice, that once
Would greet the Sufferer long before they met,
And on his ear strike like a pleasant music,
"Art thou not guilty?"—"No! Indeed I am not!"
But all is unavailing. In that Court
Groans are confessions; Patience, Fortitude,**

The work of Magic; and, released, upheld,
For Condemnation, from his Father's lips
He hears the sentence, "Banishment to CANDIA.
Death if he leaves it."

And the bark sets sail;

And he is gone from all he loves—for ever!
His wife, his boys, and his disconsolate parents!
Gone in the dead of night—unseen of any—
Without a word, a look of tenderness,
To be called up, when, in his lonely hours
He would indulge in weeping.

Like a ghost,

Day after day, year after year, he haunts
An ancient rampart, that o'erhangs the sea;
Gazing on vacancy, and hourly starting

To answer to the watch—Alas, how changed
From him the mirror of the Youth of VENICE,
In whom the slightest thing, or whim or chance,
Did he but wear his doublet so and so,
All followed; at whose nuptials, when at length
He won that maid at once the fairest, noblest,
A daughter of the House of Contarini,
That House as old as VENICE, now among
Its ancestors in monumental brass
Numbering eight Doges—to convey her home,
The Bucentaur went forth; and thrice the Sun
Shone on the Chivalry, that, front to front,
And blaze on blaze reflecting, met and ranged
To tourney in ST. MARK'S.

But lo, at last,

Messengers come. He is recalled: his heart
Leaps at the tidings. He embarks: the boat
Springs to the oar, and back again he goes,
Into that very Chamber! there to lie
In his old resting-place, the bed of torture;
And thence look up (Five long, long years of Grief
Have not killed either) on his wretched Sire,
Still in that seat—as though he had not left it,
Immovable, enveloped in his mantle.

But now he comes, convicted of a crime
Great by the laws of VENICE. Night and day,
Brooding on what he had been, what he was,
'Twas more than he could bear. His longing-fits
Thickened upon him. His desire for home

Became a madness; and, resolved to go,
If but to die, in his despair he writes
A letter to Francesco, Duke of MILAN,
Soliciting his influence with the State,
And drops it to be found.—“Would ye know all?
I have transgressed, offended wilfully;
And am prepared to suffer as I ought.
But let me, let me, if but for an instant,
Ye must consent—for all of you are sons,
Most of you husbands, fathers, let me first
Indulge the natural feelings of a man,
And, ere I die, if such my sentence be,
Press to my heart ('tis all I ask of you)
My wife, my children—and my aged mother—
Say, is she yet alive?”

He is condemned

**To go ere set of sun, go whence he came,
A banished man—and for a year to breathe
The vapour of a dungeon.—But his prayer
(What could they less?) is granted.**

In a hall

**Open and crowded by the common rabble,
"Twas there a trembling Wife and her four sons
Yet young, a Mother, borne along, bedridden,
And an old Doge, mustering up all his strength,
That strength how small, assembled now to meet
One so long lost, long mourned, one who for them
Had braved so much—death, and yet worse than
death—
To meet him and to part with him for ever!**

Time and their heavy wrongs had changed
them all;
Him most! Yet when the Wife, the Mother looked
Again, 'twas he himself, 'twas GIACOMO,
Their only hope, and trust, and consolation!
And all clung round him, weeping bitterly;
Weeping the more, because they wept in vain.

Unnerved, unsettled in his mind from long
And exquisite pain, he sobs aloud and cries,
Kissing the old Man's cheek, "Help me, my Father!
Let me, I pray thee, live once more among you:
Let me go home."—"My Son," returns the Doge,
Mastering awhile his grief, "if I may still
Call thee my Son, if thou art innocent,

As I would fain believe," but, as he speaks,
He falls, "submit without a murmur."

Night,
That to the World brought revelry, to them
Brought only food for sorrow. GIACOMO
Embarked—to die; sent to an early grave
For thee, Erizzo, whose death-bed confession,
"He is most innocent! 'Twas I who did it!"
Came when he slept in peace. The ship, that sailed
Swift as the winds with his recall to Honour,
Bore back a lifeless corse. Generous as brave,
Affection, kindness, the sweet offices
Of Love and Duty were to him as needful
As was his daily bread;—and to become
A by-word in the meanest mouths of VENICE;

Bringing a stain on those who gave him life,
On those, alas, now worse than fatherless—
To be proclaimed a ruffian, a night-stabber,
He on whom none before had breathed reproach—
He lived but to disprove it. That hope lost,
Death followed. From the hour he went, he
spoke not;
And in his dungeon, when he laid him down,
He sunk to rise no more. Oh, if there be
Justice in Heaven, and we are assured there is,
A day must come of ample Retribution!

Then was thy cup, old Man, full to o'erflowing.
But thou wert yet alive; and there was one,
The soul and spring of all that Enmity,

Who would not leave thee; fastening on thy flank,
Hungering and thirsting, still unsatisfied;
One of a name illustrious as thine own!
One of the Ten! one of the Invisible Three!

"Twas LOREDANO.

When the whelps were gone,
He would dislodge the Lion from his den;
And, leading on the pack he long had led,
The miserable pack that ever howled
Against fallen Greatness, moved that FOSCARIS
Be Doge no longer; urging his great age,
His incapacity and nothingness;
Calling a Father's sorrows in his chamber
Neglect of duty, anger, contumacy.
"I am most willing to retire," said FOSCARIS:

“ But I have sworn, and cannot of myself.
Do with me as ye please.”

He was deposed,
He, who had reigned so long and gloriously;
His ducal bonnet taken from his brow,
His robes stript off, his ring, that ancient symbol,
Broken before him. But now nothing moved
The meekness of his soul. All things alike!
Among the six that came with the decree,
FOSCARÌ saw one he knew not, and inquired
His name. “ I am the son of MARCO MEMMO.”
“ Ah,” he replied, “ thy father was my friend.”

And now he goes. “ It is the hour and past.
I have no business here.” —“ But wilt thou not

Avoid the gazing crowd? That way is private."

"No! as I entered, so will I retire."

And, leaning on his staff, he left the Palace,

His residence for four-and-thirty years,

By the same staircase he came up in splendour,

The staircase of the Giants. Turning round,

When in the court below, he stopt and said,

"My merits brought me hither. I depart,

Driven by the malice of my Enemies."

Then thro' the crowd withdrew, poor as he came,

And in his gondola went off, unfollowed

But by the sighs of them that dared not speak.

This journey was his last. When the bell rung,

Next day, announcing a new Doge to VENICE,

It rung his knell.

But whence the deadly hate
That caused all this—the hate of LOREDANO?
It was a legacy his Father left him,
Who, but for FOSCARÍ, had reigned in Venice,
And, like the venom in the serpent's bag,
Gathered and grew! Nothing but turned to venom!
In vain did FOSCARÍ sue for peace, for friendship,
Offering in marriage his fair Isabel.
He changed not; with a dreadful piety,
Studying revenge; listening alone to those
Who talked of vengeance; grasping by the hand
Those in their zeal (and none, alas, were wanting)
Who came to tell him of another Wrong,
Done or imagined. When his father died,
'Twas whispered in his ear, "He died by poison!"

He wrote it on the tomb ('tis there in marble)
And in his ledger-book—among his debtors—
Entered the name, "FRANCESCO FOSCARÍ."
And added "For the murder of my Father."
Leaving a blank—to be filled up hereafter.
When FOSCARÍ's noble heart at length gave way,
He took the volume from the shelf again
Calmly, and with his pen filled up the blank,
Inscribing, "He has paid me."

XVII.

TH_ER_E is, within three leagues and less of PADUA,
(The Paduan student knows it, honours it)
A lonely tomb-stone in a mountain-churchyard;
And I arrived there as the sun declined
Low in the west. The gentle airs, that breathe
Fragrance at eve, were rising, and the birds
Singing their farewell-song—the very song
They sung the night that tomb received a tenant;
When, as alive, clothed in his Canon's habit,
And, slowly winding down the narrow path,

He came to rest there. Nobles of the land,
Princes and prelates mingled in his train,
Anxious by any act, while yet they could,
To catch a ray of glory by reflection;
And from that hour have kindred spirits flocked
From distant countries, from the north, the south,
To see where he is laid.

Twelve years ago,
When I descended the impetuous RHONE,
Its vineyards of such great and old renown,
Its castles, each with some romantic tale,
Vanishing fast—the pilot at the stern,
He who had steered so long, standing aloft,
His eyes on the white breakers, and his hands
On what at once served him for ear and rudder,

A huge misshapen plank—the bark itself
Frail and uncouth, launched to return no more,
Such as a shipwrecked man might hope to build,
Urged by the love of home—when I descended
Two long, long days, silence, suspense on board,
It was to offer at thy fount, VALCLUSA,
Entering the arched Cave, to wander where
PETRARCH had wandered, in a trance to sit
Where in his peasant-dress he loved to sit,
Musing, reciting—on some rock moss-grown,
Or the fantastic root of some old fig-tree,
That drinks the living waters as they stream
Over their emerald-bed; and could I now
Neglect to visit ARQUA; where, at last,
When he had done and settled with the world,

When all the illusions of his Youth were fled,
Indulged perhaps too long, cherished too fondly,
He came for the conclusion? Half-way up
He built his house, whence as by stealth he caught,
Among the hills, a glimpse of busy life,
That soothed, not stirred.—But knock, and enter in.
This was his chamber. 'Tis as when he left it;
As if he now were busy in his garden.
And this his closet. Here he sate and read.
This was his chair; and in it, unobserved,
Reading or thinking of his absent friends,
He passed away as in a quiet slumber.

Peace to this region! Peace to all who dwell here!

They know his value—every coming step,

**That gathers round the children from their play,
Would tell them if they knew not.—But could aught,
Ungentle or ungenerous, spring up
Where he is sleeping; where, and in an age
Of savage warfare and blind bigotry,
He cultured all that could refine, exalt;
Leading to better things?**

XVIII.

If ever you should come to MODENA,
(Where among other relics you may see
TASSONI's bucket—but 'tis not the true one)
Stop at a Palace near the Reggio-gate,
Dwelt in of old by one of the ORSINI.
Its noble gardens, terrace above terrace,
And rich in fountains, statues, cypresses,
Will long detain you—but, before you go,
Enter the house—forget it not, I pray you—
And look awhile upon a picture there.

'Tis of a Lady in her earliest youth,
The last of that illustrious family;
Done by ZAMPIERI—but by whom I care not.
He, who observes it—ere he passes on,
Gazes his fill, and comes and comes again,
That he may call it up, when far away.

She sits, inclining forward as to speak,
Her lips half open, and her finger up,
As tho' she said " Beware!" her vest of gold
Broidered with flowers, and clasped from head to foot,
An emerald-stone in every golden clasp;
And on her brow, fairer than alabaster,
A coronet of pearls.

But then her face,

So lovely, yet so arch, so full of mirth,
The overflowings of an innocent heart—
It haunts me still, tho' many a year has fled,
Like some wild melody!

Alone it hangs

Over a mouldering heir-loom, its companion,
An oaken-chest, half-eaten by the worm,
But richly carved by Antony of Trent
With scripture-stories from the Life of Christ;
A chest that came from VENICE and had held
The ducal robes of some old Ancestor—
That by the way—it may be true or false—
But don't forget the picture; and you will not,
When you have heard the tale they told me there.

She was an only child—her name GINEVRA,
The joy, the pride of an indulgent Father;
And in her fifteenth year became a bride,
Marrying an only son, FRANCESCO DORIA,
Her playmate from her birth, and her first love.

Just as she looks there in her bridal dress,
She was all gentleness, all gaiety,
Her pranks the favourite theme of every tongue.
But now the day was come; the day, the hour;
Now, frowning, smiling for the hundredth time,
The nurse, that ancient lady, preached decorum;
And, in the lustre of her youth, she gave
Her hand, with her heart in it, to FRANCESCO,

Great was the joy; but at the Nuptial feast,
When all sate down, the Bride herself was wanting.
Nor was she to be found! Her Father cried,
“ ‘Tis but to make a trial of our love!”
And filled his glass to all; but his hand shook,
And soon from guest to guest the panic spread.
‘Twas but that instant she had left FRANCESCO,
Laughing and looking back and flying still,
Her ivory tooth imprinted on his finger.
But now, alas, she was not to be found;
Nor from that hour could any thing be guessed,
But that she was not!

Weary of his life,
FRANCESCO flew to VENICE, and, embarking,
Flung it away in battle with the Turk.

ORSINI lived—and long might you have seen
An old man wandering as in quest of something,
Something he could not find—he knew not what.
When he was gone, the house remained awhile
Silent and tenantless—then went to strangers.

Full fifty years were past, and all forgotten,
When on an idle day, a day of search
Mid the old lumber in the Gallery,
That mouldering chest was noticed; and 'twas said
By one as young, as thoughtless as **GINEVRA**,
“ Why not remove it from its lurking-place?”
'Twas done as soon as said; but on the way
It burst, it fell; and lo, a skeleton,
With here and there a pearl, an emerald-stone,

A golden clasp, clasping a shred of gold.
All else had perished—save a wedding-ring,
And a small seal, her mother's legacy,
Engraven with a name, the name of both,
“ GINEVRA.”

There then had she found a grave!
Within that chest had she concealed herself,
Fluttering with joy, the happiest of the happy;
When a spring-lock, that lay in ambush there,
Fastened her down for ever!

XIX.

Or all the fairest Cities of the Earth
None are so fair as FLORENCE. 'Tis a gem
Of purest ray, a treasure for a casket!
And what a glorious lustre did it shed,
When it emerged from darkness! Search within,
Without; all is enchantment! 'Tis the Past
Contending with the Present; and in turn
Each has the mastery.

In this chapel wrought
MASSACCIO; and he slumbers underneath.
Wouldst thou behold his monument? Look round!
And know that where we stand, stood oft and long,
Oft till the day was gone, **RAPHAEL** himself,
He and his haughty Rival—patiently,
Humbly, to learn of those who came before,
To steal a spark from their authentick fire,
Theirs, who first broke the gloom, Sons of the Morning.

There, on the seat that runs along the wall,
South of the Church, east of the belfry-tower,
Thou canst not miss it—in the sultry time
Would **DANTE** sit conversing, and with those
Who little thought that in his hand he held

The balance, and assigned at his good pleasure
To each his place in the invisible world,
To some an upper, some a lower region;
Reserving in his secret mind a niche
For thee, Saltrello, who with quirks of law
Hadst plagued him sore, and carefully requiting
Such as ere-long condemned his mortal part
To fire. Sit down awhile—then by the gates
Wondrously wrought, so beautiful, so glorious,
That they might serve to be the gates of Heaven,
Enter the Baptistry. That place he loved;
Calling it his! And in his visits there
Well might he take delight! For, when a child,
Playing, with venturous feet, near and yet nearer
One of the fonts, fell in, he flew and saved him,

Flew with an energy, a violence,
That broke the marble—a mishap ascribed
To evil motives; his, alas, to lead
A life of trouble, and ere-long to leave
All things most dear to him, ere-long to know
How salt another's bread is, and how toilsome
The going up and down another's stairs.

Nor then forget that Chamber of the Dead,
Where the gigantic forms of Night and Day,
Turned into stone, rest everlasting;
Yet still are breathing, and shed round at noon
A two-fold influence—only to be felt—
A light, a darkness, mingling each with each;
Both and yet neither. There, from age to age,

Two Ghosts are sitting on their sepulchres.

That is the Duke LORENZO. Mark him well:

He meditates, his head upon his hand.

**What scowls beneath his broad and helm-like
bonnet?**

Is it a face, or but an eyeless scull ?

'Tis hid in shade; yet, like the basilisk,

.It fascinates, and is intolerable.

His mien is noble, most majestical!

Then most so, when the distant choir is heard;

At morn or eve—nor fail thou to attend

On that thrice-hallowed day, when all are there;

When all, propitiating with solemn songs,

With light, and frankincense; and holy water;

Visit the Dead. Then wilt thou feel his Power!

But let not Sculpture, Painting, Poesy,
Or They, the Masters of these mighty Spells,
Detain us. Our first homage is to Virtue.

Where, in what dungeon of the Citadel,
(It must be known—the writing on the wall
Cannot be gone—'twas cut in with his dagger,
Ere on his knees to God, he slew himself,)

Where, in what dungeon, did FILIPPO STROZZI,
The last, the greatest of the Men of FLORENCE,
Breathe out his soul—lest in his agony,
When on the rack and called upon to answer,
He might accuse the Guiltless.

That debt paid,

But with a sigh, a tear for human frailty,
We may return, and once more give a loose

To the delighted spirit—worshipping,
In her small temple of rich workmanship,*
Venus herself, who, when she left the skies,
Came hither.

* *The Tribune.*

XX.

AMONG the awful forms that stand assembled
In the great square of FLORENCE, may be seen
That COSMO, not the Father of his Country,
Not he so styled, but he who played the Tyrant.
Clad in rich armour like a Paladin,
But with his helmet off—in kingly state,
Aloft he sits upon his horse of brass;
And they, who read the legend underneath,
Go and pronounce him happy. Yet there is
A chamber at GROSSETO, that, if walls

Could speak, and tell of what is done within,
Would turn your admiration into pity.
Half of what passed, died with him; but the rest,
All he discovered when the fit was on,
All that, by those who listened, could be gleaned
From broken sentences and starts in sleep,
Is told and by an honest Chronicler.

Two of his sons, GIOVANNI and GARZIA;
(The eldest had not seen his sixteenth summer)
Went to the chase; but one of them, GIOVANNI,
His best beloved, the glory of his House,
Returned not; and at close of day was found
Bathed in his innocent blood. Too well, alas,
The trembling COSMO guessed the deed, the doer;

And, having caused the body to be borne
In secret to that Chamber—at an hour
When all slept sound, save the disconsolate Mother,*
Who little thought of what was yet to come,
And lived but to be told—he bade GARZIA
Arise and follow him. Holding in one hand
A winking lamp, and in the other a key
Massive and dungeon-like, thither he led;
And, having entered in and locked the door,
The father fixed his eyes upon the son,
And closely questioned him. No change betrayed
Or guilt or fear. Then COSMO lifted up
The bloody sheet. “Look there! Look there!”
he cried.
“Blood calls for blood—and from a father’s hand!

* Eleonora di Toledo.

—Unless thyself wilt save him that sad office.
What!" he exclaimed, when, shuddering at the sight,
The boy breathed out, " I stood but on my guard."
" Dar'st thou then blacken one who never wronged
thee,
Who would not set his foot upon a worm?—
Yes, thou must die, lest others fall by thee,
And thou shouldst be the slayer of us all."
Then from GARZIA's side he took the dagger,
That fatal one which spilt his brother's blood;
And, kneeling on the ground, "Great God!" he cried,
" Grant me the strength to do an act of Justice.
Thou knowest what it costs me; but, alas,
How can I spare myself, sparing none else?
Grant me the strength, the will—and oh forgive

The sinful soul of a most wretched son.

"Tis a most wretched father who implores it."

Long on GARZIA's neck he hung, and wept

Tenderly, long pressed him to his bosom;

And then, but while he held him by the arm,

Thrusting him backward, turned away his face,

And stabbed him to the heart.

Well might DE THOU,

When in his youth he came to COSMO's court,

Think on the Past; and, as he wandered through

The Ancient Palace—through those ample spaces

Silent, deserted—stop awhile to dwell

Upon two portraits there, drawn on the wall

Together, as of two in bonds of love,

One in a Cardinal's habit, one in black,

Those of the unhappy brothers, and infer
From the deep silence that his questions drew,
The terrible truth.

Well might he heave a sigh
For poor humanity, when he beheld
That very Cosmo shaking o'er his fire,
Drowsy and deaf and inarticulate,
Wrapt in his night-gown, o'er a sick-man's mess,
In the last stage—death-struck and deadly pale;
His wife, another, not his Eleonora,
At once his nurse and his interpreter.

XXI.

Tis morning. Let us wander thro' the fields,
Where CIMABUE found a shepherd-boy*
Tracing his idle fancies on the ground;
And let us from the top of FIESOLE,
Whence GALILEO's glass by night observed
The phases of the moon, look round below
On ARNO's vale, where the dove-coloured oxen
Are ploughing up and down among the vines,
While many a careless note is sung aloud,

* Giotto.

Filling the air with sweetness—and on thee,
Beautiful FLORENCE, all within thy walls,
Thy groves and gardens, pinnacles and towers,
Drawn to our feet.

From that small spire, just caught
By the bright ray, that church among the rest
By One of Old distinguished as The Bride,
Let us pursue in thought (what can we better?)
Those who assembled there at matin-prayers; *
Who, when Vice revelled and along the street
Tables were set, what time the bearer's bell
Rang to demand the dead at every door,
Came out into the meadows; and, awhile
Wandering in idleness, but not in folly,
Sate down in the high grass and in the shade

* See the Decameron. First Day.

Of many a tree sun-proof—day after day,
When all was still and nothing to be heard
But the cicala's voice among the olives,
Relating in a ring, to banish care,
Their hundred novels.

Round the hill they went,
Round underneath—first to a splendid house,
Gherardi, as an old tradition runs,
That on the left, just rising from the vale;
A place for Luxury—the painted rooms,
The open galleries and middle court
Not unprepared, fragrant and gay with flowers.
Then west-ward to another, nobler yet;
That on the right, now known as the Palmieri,
Where Art with Nature vied—a Paradise,

With verdurous walls, and many a trellised walk
All rose and jasmine, many a forest-vista
Crossed by the deer. Then to the Ladies' Valley;
And the clear lake, that seemed as by enchantment
To lift up to the surface every stone
Of lustre there, and the diminutive fish
Innumerable, dropt with crimson and gold,
Now motionless, now glancing to the sun.

Who has not dwelt on their voluptuous day?
The morning-banquet by the fountain-side,
The dance that followed, and the noon-tide slumber;
Then the tales told in turn, as round they lay
On carpets, the fresh waters murmuring;
And the short interval filled up with games

Of Chess, and talk, and reading old Romances,
Till supper-time, when many a syren-voice
Sung down the stars, and in the grass the torches
Burnt brighter for their absence.

He,* whose dream
It was (it was no more) sleeps in Val d'Elsa,
Sleeps in the church, where (in his ear, I ween)
The Friar poured out his catalogue of treasures;
A ray, imprimis, of the star that shone
To the Wise Men; a phial-ful of sounds,
The musical chimes of the great bells that hung
In Solomon's Temple; and, though last not least,
A feather from the Angel Gabriel's wing,
Dropt in the Virgin's chamber.

That dark ridge,

* Boccaccio.

Stretching away in the South-east, conceals it;
Not so his lowly roof and scanty farm,
His copse and rill, if yet a trace be left,
Who lived in Val di Pesa, suffering long
Exile and want, and the keen shafts of Malice,
With an unclouded mind.* The glimmering tower
On the grey rock beneath, his land-mark once,
Now serves for ours, and points out where he ate
His bread with cheerfulness.

Who sees him not

('Tis his own sketch—he drew it from himself)

Playing the bird-catcher, and sallying forth
In an autumnal morn, laden with cages,
To catch a thrush on every lime-twig there;
Or in the wood among his wood-cutters;

* Machiavel.

Or in the tavern by the highway-side
At tric-trac with the miller; or at night,
Doffing his rustic suit, and, duly clad,
Entering his closet, and, among his books,
Among the Great of every age and clime,
A numerous court, turning to whom he pleased,
Questioning each why he did this or that,
And learning how to overcome the fear
Of poverty and death?

Nearer we hail

Thy sunny slope, ARCETRI, sung of Old
For its green wine—dearer to me, to most,
As dwelt on by that great Astronomer,*
Seven years a prisoner at the city-gate,
Let in but in his grave-clothes. Sacred be

* Galileo.

His cottage (justly was it called The Jewel!)
Sacred the vineyard, where, while yet his sight
Glimmered, at blush of dawn he dressed his vines,
Chanting aloud in gaiety of heart
Some verse of ARIOSTO. There, unseen,
In manly beauty MILTON stood before him,
Gazing with reverent awe—MILTON, his guest,
Just then come forth, all life and enterprize;
He in his old age and extremity,
Blind, at noon-day exploring with his staff;
His eyes upturned as to the golden sun,
His eye-balls idly rolling. Little then
Did GALILEO think whom he bade welcome;
That in his hand he held the hand of one
Who could requite him—who would spread his name.

O'er lands and seas—great as himself, nay greater;
MILTON as little that in him he saw,
As in a glass, what he himself should be,
Destined so soon to fall on evil days
And evil tongues—so soon, alas, to live
In darkness, and with dangers compassed round,
And solitude.

Well-pleased, could we pursue
The ARNO, from his birth-place in the clouds,
So near the yellow TIBER's—springing up
From his four fountains on the Apennine,
That mountain-ridge a sea-mark to the ships
Sailing on either sea. Downward he runs,
Scattering fresh verdure thro' the desolate wild,
Down by the City of Hermits, and, ere-long,

The venerable woods of VALLOMBROSA ;
Then thro' these gardens to the TUSCAN sea,
Reflecting castles, convents, villages,
And those great Rivals in an elder day,
FLORENCE and **PISA**—who have given him fame,
Fame everlasting, but who stained so oft
His troubled waters. Oft, alas, were seen,
When flight, pursuit, and hideous rout were there,
Hands, clad in gloves of steel, held up imploring ;
The man, the hero, on his foaming steed,
Borne underneath—already in the realms
Of Darkness.

Nor did night or burning noon
Bring respite. Oft, as that great Artist saw,*
Whose pencil had a voice, the cry “To arms!”

* Michael Angelo.

And the shrill trumpet hurried up the bank
Those who had stolen an hour to breast the tide,
And wash from their unharnessed limbs the blood
And sweat of battle. Sudden was the rush,
Violent the tumult; for, already in sight,
Nearer and nearer yet the danger drew;
Each every sinew straining, every feature,
Each snatching up, and girding, buckling on
Morion and greave and shirt of twisted mail,
As for his life—no more perchance to taste,
ARNO, the grateful freshness of thy glades,
Thy waters—where, exulting, he had felt
A swimmer's transport, there, alas, to float
And welter. Nor between the gusts of War,
When flocks were feeding, and the shepherd's pipe

Gladdened the valley, when, but not unarmed,
The sower came forth, and, following him who
ploughed,
Threw in the seed—did thy indignant waves
Escape pollution. Sullen was the splash,
Heavy and swift the plunge, when they received
The key that had just grated on the ear
Of UGOLINO—closing up for ever
That dismal dungeon henceforth to be named
The Tower of Famine.

But look round and say,
Where is the ground that did not drink warm blood,
The echo that had learnt not to articulate
The cry of murder?—Fatal was the day*
To FLORENCE, when ('twas in a street behind

* See Note.

The church and convent of the Holy Cross—

There is the house—that house of the Donati,

Towerless, and left long since, but to the last

Braving assault—all rugged, all embossed

Below, and still distinguished by the rings

Of brass, that held in war and festival-time

Their family-standards) fatal was the day

To Florence, when, at morn, at the ninth hour,

A noble Dame in weeds of widow-hood,

Weeds to be worn hereafter by so many,

Stood at her door; and, like a sorceress, flung

Her dazzling spell. Subtle she was, and rich,

Rich in a hidden pearl of heavenly light,

Her daughter's beauty; and too well she knew

Its virtue! Patiently she stood and watched;

Nor stood alone—but spoke not—In her breast
Her purpose lay; and, as a Youth passed by,
Clad for the nuptial rite, she smiled and said,
Lifting a corner of the maiden’s veil,
“ This had I treasured up in secret for thee.
This hast thou lost!” He gazed and was undone!
Forgetting—not forgot—he broke the bond,
And paid the penalty, losing his life
At the bridge-foot; and hence a world of woe!
Vengeance for vengeance crying, blood for blood;
No intermission! Law, that slumbers not,
And, like the Angel with the flaming sword,
Sits over all, at once chastising, healing,
Himself the Avenger, went; and every street
Ran red with mutual slaughter—tho’ sometimes

The young forgot the lessons they had learnt,
And loved when they should hate—like thee, Imelda,
Thee and thy Paolo. When last ye met
In that still hour (the heat, the glare was gone,
Not so the splendour—thro' the cedar-grove
A radiance streamed like a consuming fire,
As if the glorious orb, in its descent,
Had come and rested there) when last ye met,
And those relentless brothers dragged him forth,
It had been well, hadst thou slept on, Imelda,
Nor from thy trance of fear awaked, as night
Fell on that fatal spot, to wish thee dead,
To track him by his blood, to search, to find,
Then fling thee down to catch a word, a look,
A sigh, if yet thou couldst (alas, thou couldst not)

And die, unseen, unthought of—from the wound
Sucking the poison.

Yet, when Slavery came,
Worse followed. Genius, Valour left the land,
Indignant—all that had from age to age
Adorned, ennobled; and head-long they fell,
Tyrant and slave. For deeds of violence,
Done in broad day and more than half redeemed
By many a great and generous sacrifice
Of self to others, came the unpledged bowl,
The stab of the stiletto. Gliding by
Unseen, in his slouched hat and muffling cloak,
The Bravo took his stand, and o'er the shoulder
Plunged to the hilt, or from beneath the ribs
Struck upward—then slunk off, or, if pursued,
Made for the Sanctuary, and there along

The glimmering aisle among the worshippers
Wandered with restless step and jealous eye,
Dropping thick gore.

Misnamed to lull suspicion,
In every Palace was The Laboratory,
Where he within brewed poisons swift and slow,
That scattered terror 'till all things seemed
poisonous,
And brave men trembled if a hand held out
A nosegay or a letter; while the Great
Drank from the Venice-glass, that broke, that
shivered,
If aught malignant, aught of thine was there,
Cruel Tophana; and pawned provinces
For the miraculous gem that to the wearer

Gave signs infallible of coming ill,
That clouded tho' the vehicle of death
Were an invisible perfume.

Happy then

The guest to whom at sleeping-time 'twas said,
But in an under-voice (a lady's page
Speaks in no louder) "Pass not on. That door
Leads to another which awaits your coming,
One in the floor—now left, alas, unbolted.

No eye detects it—lying under-foot,
Just as you enter, at the threshold-stone;
Ready to fall and plunge you into darkness,
Darkness and long oblivion!"

Then indeed

Where lurked not danger? Thro' the fairy-land

No seat of pleasure glittering half-way down,
No hunting-place—but with some damning spot
That will not be washed out! There, at Caiano,
Where, when the hawks were hooded and Night
came,
PULCI would set the table in a roar
With his wild lay—there, where the Sun descends,
And hill and dale are lost, veiled with his beams,
The fair Venetian* died—she and her lord,
Died of a posset drugged by him who sate
And saw them suffer, flinging back the charge,
The murderer on the murdered.

Sobs of Grief,†

Sounds inarticulate -- suddenly stopt,
And followed by a struggle and a gasp,

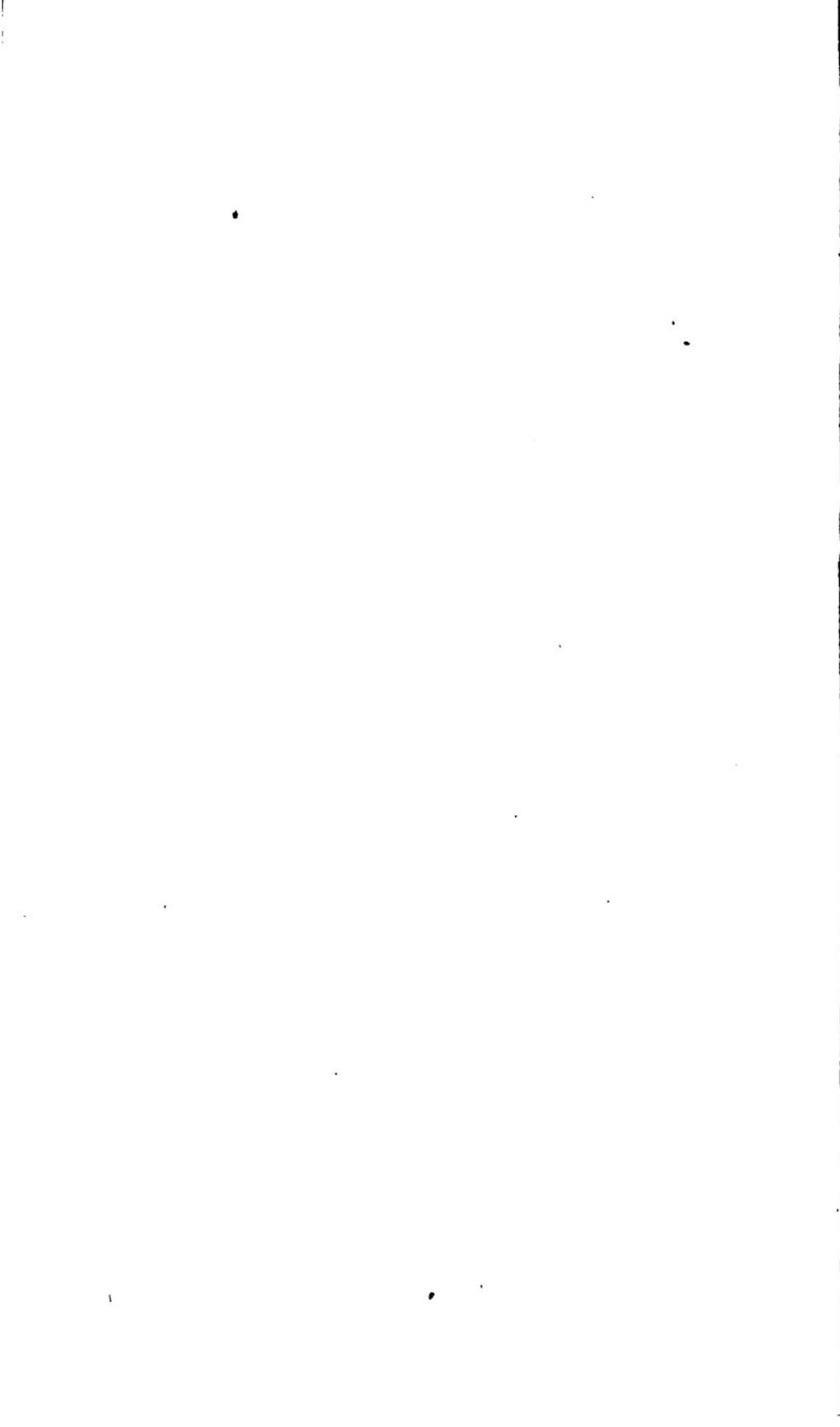
* Bianca Capello.

† See Note.

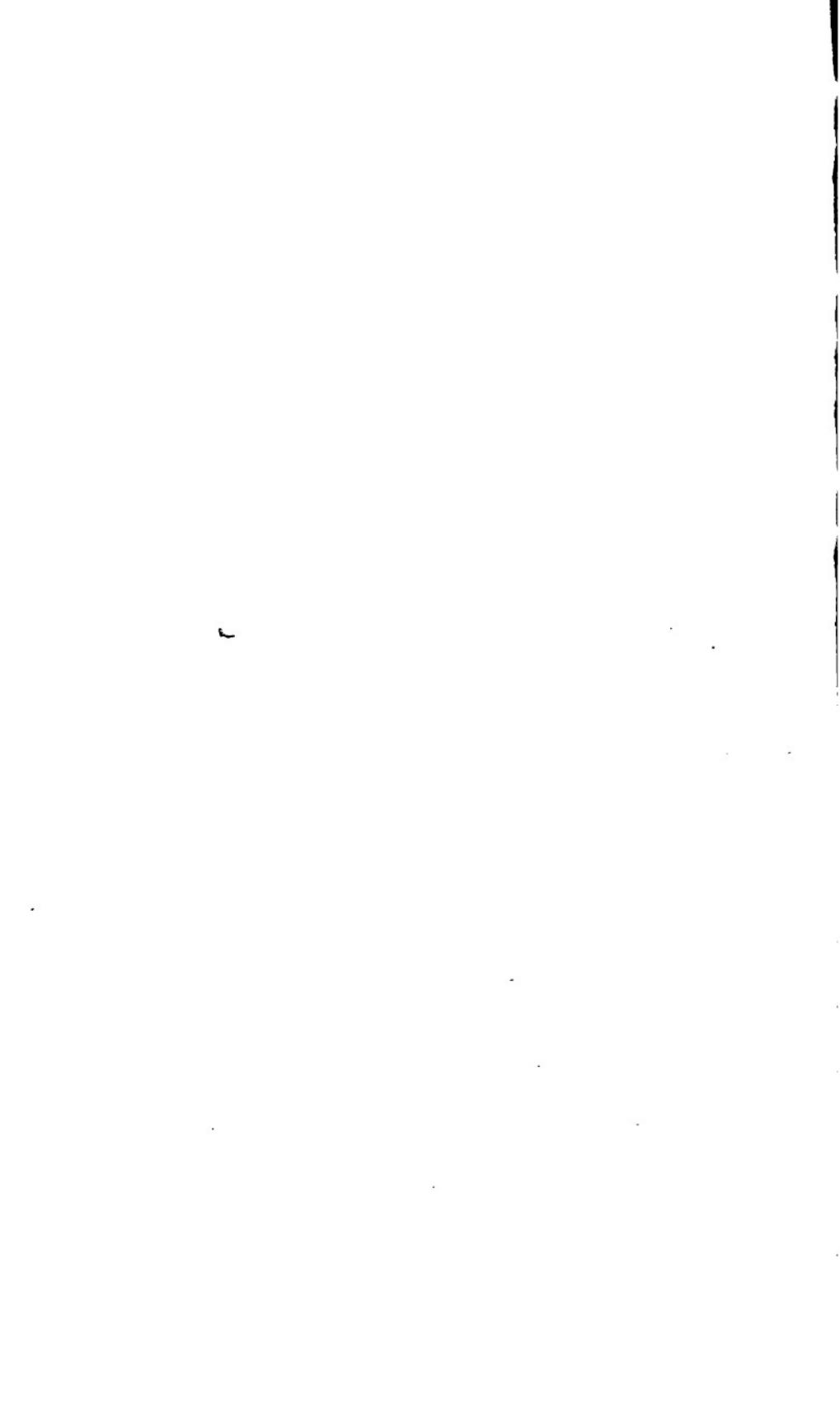
A gasp in death, are heard yet in Cerreto,
Along the marble halls and staircases,
Nightly at twelve; and, at the self-same hour,
Shrieks, such as penetrate the inmost soul,
Such as awake the innocent babe to long,
Long wailing, echo thro' the emptiness
Of that old den far up among the hills,
Frowning on him who comes from Pietra-Mala:
In them, in both, within five days and less,
Two unsuspecting victims, passing fair,
Welcomed with kisses; and slain cruelly,
One with the knife, one with the fatal noose.

But lo, the Sun is setting; earth and sky
One blaze of glory—What but now we saw.

As tho' it were not, tho' it had not been !
He lingers yet; and, lessening to a point,
Shines like the eye of Heaven—then withdraws;
And from the zenith to the utmost skirts
All is celestial red ! The hour is come,
When they that on the distant seas are sailing,
Languish for home ; and they that in the morn
Said to sweet friends 'farewell,' melt as at parting;
When, journeying on, the pilgrim, if he hears,
As now we hear it—echoing round the hill,
The bell that seems to mourn the dying day,
Slackens his pace and sighs, and those he loved
Loves more than ever. But who feels it not ?
And well may we, for we are far away.
Let us retire, and hail it in our hearts.



NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.



NOTES

AND

ILLUSTRATIONS.

Page 1, line 4.

As on that Sabbath-eve when he arrived,

‘J’arrive essoufflé, tout en nage; le cœur me bat, je vois de loin les soldats à leur poste; j’acours, je crie d’une voix étouffée. Il étoit trop tard.’ See *Les Confessions*, L. 1. The street, in which he was born, is called Rue Rousseau.

P. 1, l. 9.

He sate him down and wept—wept till the morning;

“Lines of eleven syllables occur almost in every page of Milton; but though they are not unpleasing, they ought not to be admitted into heroic poetry; since the narrow limits of our language allow us no other distinction of epic and tragic measures.”

It is remarkable that he used them most at last. In the *Paradise Regained* they occur oftener than in the *Paradise Lost* in the proportion of ten to one; and let it be remembered that they supply us with another close, another cadence; that they

add, as it were, a string to the instrument; and, by enabling the Poet to relax at pleasure, to rise and fall with his subject, contribute what is most wanted, compass, variety.

Shakspeare seems to have delighted in them, and in some of his soliloquies has used them seven and eight times in succession; an example I have not followed in mine.

P. 4, l. 8.

..... *like him of old,*

The Abbot of Clairvaux. “To admire or despise St. Bernard as he ought,” says Gibbon, “the reader like myself should have before the windows of his library, that incomparable landskip.”

P. 4, l. 11.

That winds beside the mirror of all beauty,

There is no describing in words; but the following lines were written on the spot, and may serve perhaps to recall to some of my readers what they have seen in this enchanting country.

I love to watch in silence till the Sun
Sets; and MONT BLANC, arrayed in crimson and
gold,

Flings his broad shadow half across the Lake ;
 That shadow, tho' it comes thro' pathless tracts
 Of Ether, and o'er Alp and desert drear,
 Only less bright, less glorious than himself.
 But, while we gaze, 'tis gone ! And now he shines
 Like burnished silver ; all, below, the Night's.—

Such moments are most precious. Yet there are
 Others, that follow them, to me still more so ;
 When once again he changes, once again
 Clothing himself in grandeur all his own ;
 When, like a Ghost, shadowless, colourless,
 He melts away into the Heaven of Heavens ;
 Himself alone revealed, all lesser things
 As tho' they were not !

P. 7, l. 10.

Two dogs of grave demeanour welcomed me,
 Berri, so remarkable for his sagacity, was dead.
 His skin is stuffed, and is preserved in the Museum
 of Berne.

P. 11, l. 1.

But the Bise blew cold;

The north-east wind. This description was
 written in June, 1816.

P. 14, l. 6.

*that house so rich of old,
So courteous,*

The words of Ariosto.

Ricca—e cortesa a chiunque vi venia.

Milton was there at the fall of the leaf.

P. 15, l. 10.

Bread to the hungry,

They distribute, in the course of the year, from thirty to thirty-five thousand rations of food; receiving travellers of every description.

Le Pere Biselx, Prieur.

P. 18, l. 6.

DESAIX, who turned the scale,

'Of all the generals I ever had under me, Desaix possessed the greatest talents. He loved glory for itself.'

P. 21, l. 3.

. nor long before,

M. Ebel mentions an escape almost as miraculous.

L'an 1790, le nommé Christian Boren, propriétaire de l'auberge du Grindelwald, eut le malheur de se jeter dans une fente du glacier, en le tra-

versant avec un troupeau de moutons qu'il rameunoit des pâturages de Bäniseck. Heureusement qu'il tomba dans le voisinage du grand torrent qui coule dans l'intérieur, il en suivit le lit par-dessous les voûtes de glace, et arriva au pied du glacier avec un bras cassé. Cet homme est actuellement encore en vie."

Manuel du Voyageur. Art. *Grindelwald.*

P. 28, l. 5.

..... *a wondrous monument,*

Almost every mountain of any rank or condition has such a bridge. The most celebrated in this country is on the Swiss-side of St. Gothard.

P. 35, l. 8.

Mine but for those, who, like Jean Jaques, delight

J'aime beaucoup ce tournoiemont, pourvu que
je sois en sûreté. *Les Confessions.* L. iv.

P. 35, l. 12.

..... *just where the Abbot fell,*

Où il y a environ dix ans, que l'Abbé de St. Maurice, Mons. Cocatrix, a été précipité avec sa voiture, ses chevaux, sa cuisinière, et son cocher.

Descript. du Valais, p. 120.

P. 42, l. 11.

Painted by Cagliari;

Commonly called Paul Veronese.

P. 42, l. 13.

..... *quaffing gramolata,*

A sherbet half-frozen.

P. 46, l. 5.

Like him who, in the days of Minstrelsy,

Petrarch, Epist. Rer. Sen. l. v. ep. 3.

P. 47, l. 3.

Before the great MASTINO.....

Mastino de la Scala, the Lord of Verona. Corlusio, the ambassador and historian, saw him so surrounded. L. 6.

This house had been always open to the unfortunate. In the days of Can Grande all were welcome; Poets, Philosophers, Artists, Warriors. Each had his apartment, each a separate table; and at the hour of dinner musicians and jesters went from room to room. Dante, as we learn from himself, found an asylum there.

Lo primo tuo rifugio, e'l primo ostello
 Sarà la cortesia del gran Lombardo,
 Che'n su la scala porta il santo uccello.

P. 50, l. 3.

And shall I sup where JULIET at the Masque

The old Palace of the Cappelletti, with its uncouth balcony and irregular windows, is still standing in a lane near the Market-place; and what Englishman can behold it with indifference?

When we enter Verona, we forget ourselves, and are almost inclined to say with Dante,
 Vieni a veder Montecchi, e Cappelletti.

P. 53, l. 1.

In this neglected mirror,

As this is the only instance, with which I am acquainted, of a Ghost in Italy since Brutus sat in his tent, I give it as I received it; though in the catastrophe I have been anticipated by a distinguished Writer of the present day.

It was first mentioned to me by a friend as we were crossing the Apennines together.

P. 57, l. 9.

She was walled up within the Castle-wall.

Murato was a technical word for this punishment in Italy.

P. 58, l. 9.

Issuing forth,

An old huntsman of the family met her in the haze of the morning, and never went out again.

She is still known by the name of Madonna Bianca.

P. 60, l. 5.

Still glowing with the richest hues of art,

Several were painted by Giorgione and Titian; as, for instance, those of the Fondaco de' Tedeschi and the Ca' Grimani. See Vasari.

P. 60, l. 10.

..... *the tower of Ezzelino—*

Now an Observatory. On the wall there is a long inscription: "Piis carcerem adspergite lacrymis," &c.

Ezzelino is seen by Dante in the river of blood.

Inferno, xii.

P. 61, l. 4.

A vagrant crew, and careless of to-morrow,

Douze personnes, tant acteurs qu'actrices, un souffleur, un machiniste, un garde du magasin, des enfants de tout âge, des chiens, des chats, des singes, des perroquets; c'étoit l'arche de Noé.— Ma préférence pour les soubrettes m'arrêta sur Madame Baccherini.

Goldoni.

P. 61, l. 12.

The lagging mules

The passage-boats are drawn up and down the Brenta.

P. 64, l. 7.

Ere yet the Casila came

A Caravan.

P. 69, l. 4.

Playing at MORA

A national game of great antiquity, and most probably the 'micare digitis' of the Romans.

P. 70, l. 4.

..... *twelve Procurators.*

The Procuratorship of St. Mark was the second dignity in the Republic.

P. 75, l. 4.

The brass is gone, the porphyry remains.

They were placed in the floor as memorials. The brass was engraven with the words addressed by the Pope to the Emperor, ‘Super Aspidem,’ &c.

P. 75, l. 7.

Of the proud Pontiff—

Alexander III. He fled in disguise to Venice, and is said to have passed the first night on the steps of San Salvatore. The entrance is from the Merceria, near the foot of the Rialto; and it is thus recorded in a small tablet at the door. *Alexandro III. Pont. Max. pernoctanti.*

P. 76, l. 11.

..... *resounding with their feet,*

See Petrarch’s description of them, and of the tournament. *Rer. Senil. l. 4. ep. 2.*

P. 79, l. 2.

*Down which the grizzly head of old FALIERO
Rolled from the block.*

Of him and his conspiracy I had given a brief account; but he is now universally known through a Writer, whose poetical talents command as much the admiration of other countries as of his own.

P. 79, l. 6.

*A short inscription on the Doge's chair
Led to another on the wall yet shorter;*

Marino Faliero dalla bella moglie, altri la gode
ed egli la mantiene.

Locus Marini Faletri decapitati pro criminibus.

P. 82, l. 1.

And bore away to the Canal ORFANO,

A deep channel behind the island of S. Giorgio Maggiore.

P. 83, l. 4.

Who were the Six we supped with Yesternight?

An allusion to the Supper in Candide. c. xxvi.

P. 83, l. 7.

'Who answered me just now?'

See Schiller's Ghost-seer. c. i.

P. 83, l. 11.

'But who stands there, alone among them all?'

See the history of Bragadino, the Alchymist, as related by Daru. Hist. de Venise. c. 28.

P. 89, l. 9.

Then in close converse;

I am indebted for this thought to some unpublished travels by the Author of Vathek.

P. 90, l. 9.

and he sung

As in the time when VENICE was herself,

Goldoni, describing his excursion with the Pas-salacqua, has left us a lively picture of this class of men.

We were no sooner in the middle of that great lagoon which encircles the City, than our discreet Gondolier drew the curtain behind us, and let us float at the will of the waves.—At length

night came on, and we could not tell where we were. "What is the hour?" said I to the Gondolier.—"I cannot guess, Sir; but, if I am not mistaken, it is the lover's hour."—"Let us go home," I replied; and he turned the prow homeward, singing, as he rowed, the twenty-sixth strophe of the sixteenth canto of the *Jerusalem Delivered*.

P. 92, l. 4.

The young BIANCA found her father's door,

Bianca Capello. It had been shut by a baker's boy, as he passed by, at day-break; and in her despair she fled with her lover to Florence, where he fell by assassination. Her beauty, and her love-adventure as here related, her marriage afterwards with the Grand Duke, and that fatal banquet at which they were both poisoned by the Cardinal, his brother, have rendered her history a romance. The Capello Palace is on the Canalé di Canonico ; and the postern-door, *la porta di strada*, is still on its hinges. It opens into one of those narrow alleys so numerous in Venice.

P. 93, l. 1.

It was St. Mary's Eve.

This circumstance took place at Venice on the first of February, the eve of the feast of the Purification of the Virgin, A. D. 944, Pietro Candiano, Doge.

P. 95, l. 5.

Her veil, transparent as the gossamer,

Among the Habiti Antichi, in that admirable book of wood-cuts ascribed to Titian, (A. D. 1590,) there is one entitled Sposa Venetiana a Castello. It was taken from an old painting in the Scuola di S. Giovanni Evangelista, and by the Writer is believed to represent one of the Brides here described.

P. 95, l. 12.

That venerable Pile on the sea-brink,

San Pietro di Castello, the Patriarchal Church of Venice.

P. 101, l. 4.

Laid at his feet.....

They were to be seen in the Treasury of St. Mark very lately.

P. 103, l. 4.

Twenty are sitting as in judgment there;

The Council of Ten and the Giunta, nel quale, says Sanuto, fù messer lo doge. The Giunta at the first examination consisted of ten Patricians, at the last of twenty.

P. 108, l. 6.

..... that maid at once the fairest, noblest,

She was a Contarini; a name coeval with the Republic, and illustrated by eight Doges. On the occasion of their marriage the Bucentaur came out in its splendour; and a bridge of boats was thrown across the Canal Grandè for the Bridegroom and his retinue of three hundred horse. Sanuto dwells with pleasure on the costliness of the dresses and the magnificence of the processions by land and

water. The tournaments in the Place of St. Mark lasted three days, and were attended by thirty thousand people.

P. 110, l. 6.

I have transgressed, offended wilfully;
It was a high crime to solicit the intercession of any Foreign Prince.

P. 115, l. 4.

the Invisible Three!

The State-Inquisitors. For an account of their Authority, see Page 84.

P. 117, l. 13.

When the bell rung,
He was at mass. Sanuto.

P. 121, l. 5.

And from that hour have kindred spirits flocked
I visited once more, says Alfieri, the tomb of our master in love, the divine Petrarch; and there, as at Ravenna, consecrated a day to meditation and verse.

P. 121, l. 10.

*Its vineyards of such great and old renown,
The Côte Rotie, the Hermitage, &c.*

P. 122, l. 14.

Neglect to visit ARQUA;

This village, says Boccaccio, hitherto almost unknown at Padua, is soon to become famous through the World; and the sailor on the Adriatic will prostrate himself, when he discovers the Euganean hills. “Among them,” will he say, “sleeps the Poet who is our glory. Ah, unhappy Florence! You neglected him—You deserved him not.”

P. 123, l. 3.

Half-way up

He built his house,

I have built, among the Euganean hills, a small house decent and proper; in which I hope to pass the rest of my days, thinking always of my dead or absent friends.

P. 124, l. 6.

He cultured all that could refine, exalt;

See an Essay on his Character, lately written by a Man no less eminent for his learning than his genius, Ugo Foscol6.

P. 125, l. 3.

TASSONI's bucket—but 'tis not the true one,

True or false, it hangs as a trophy in the Guirlandina, and affirms itself to be the very bucket which Tassoni in his mock heroics has celebrated as the cause of war between Bologna and Modena five hundred years ago. If true, it is in wonderful preservation.

P. 126, l. 3.

Done by ZAMPIERI—

Commonly called Domenichino.

P. 132, l. 4.

And what a glorious lustre did it shed,

Among other instances of her ascendancy at the close of the thirteenth century, it is related that Florence saw twelve of her citizens assembled at

the Court of Boniface the eighth, as Embassadors from different parts of Europe and Asia. Their names are mentioned in *Toscana Illustrata*.

P. 133, l. 1.

In this chapel wrought

A chapel of the Holy Virgin in the church of the Carmelites. It is adorned with his paintings, and all the great artists of Florence studied there; Leonardo da Vinci, Fra Bartolomeo, Andrea del Sarto, Michael Angelo, Raphael, &c.

He had no stone, no inscription, says one of his biographers, for he was thought little of in his life-time.

Se alcun cercasse il marmo, o il nome mio,
La Chiesa è il marmo, una cappella è il nome.

It was there that Michael Angelo received the blow in his face.—See Vasari and Cellini.

P. 133, l. 13.

Would DANTE sit conversing,

A tradition.

P. 134, l. 7.

..... condemned his mortal part
To fire

In 1302, he was sentenced, if taken, to be burned.

P. 134, l. 15.

..... *he flew and saved him,*
Inferno, xix.

P. 135, l. 8.

Nor then forget that Chamber of the Dead,
 The Chapel de' Deposit; in which are the tombs
 of the Medici, by Michael Angelo.

P. 136, l. 2.

That is the Duke LORENZO. Mark him well.

He died early; living only to become the father
 of Catherine de Medicis. Had an Evil Spirit as-
 sumed the human shape to propagate mischief, he
 could not have done better.

P. 136, l. 11.

On that thrice-hallowed day,
Il dì de' Morti. The day of All Souls.

P. 137, l. 5.

It must be known—the writing on the wall

Exoriare aliquis nostris ex ossibus ulti!

Perhaps there is nothing in language more affecting than his last testament. It is addressed “To God, the Deliverer,” and was found steeped in his blood.

P. 140, l. 7.

Is told and by an honest Chronicler.

De Thou. Alfieri has written a tragedy on the subject; if it may be said so, when he has altered so entirely the story and the characters.

P. 141, l. 3.

the disconsolate Mother,

Of the children that survived her, one fell by a brother, one by a husband; and a third murdered his wife. They are alluded to in p. 163, 4.

P. 143, l. 11.

The Ancient Palace—

The Palazzo Vecchio. Cosmo had left it several years before.

P. 143, l. 13.

..... *drawn on the wall*

By Vasari.

P. 146, l. 6.

that church among the rest

Santa Maria Novella. For its grace and beauty
it was called by Michael Angelo ‘La Sposa.’

P. 146, l. 9.

Those who assembled there at matin-prayers;

In the year of the Great Plague.

P. 146, l. 13.

Came out into the meadows;

Once, on a bright November morning, I set out
and traced them, as I conceived, step by step;
beginning and ending in the Church of Santa Maria
Novella. It was a walk delightful in itself, and in
its associations.

P. 147, l. 6.

Round the hill they went,

I have here followed Baldelli. It has been said

that Boccaccio drew from his imagination. But is it likely, when he and his readers were living within a mile or two of the spot? Truth or fiction, it furnishes a pleasant picture of the manners and amusements of the Florentines in that day.

P. 149, l. 8.

The Friar poured out his catalogue of treasures;

See the Decameron. vi. 10.

P. 150, l. 11.

'Tis his own sketch—he drew it from himself,

See a very interesting letter from Machiavel to Francesco Vettori, dated the 10th of December, 1513.

P. 151, l. 12.

sung of old

For its green wine—

La Verdea. It is celebrated by Rinuccini, Redi, and most of the Tuscan Poets.

P. 151, l. 14.

Seven years a prisoner at the city-gate,

Galileo came to Arcetri at the close of the year

1633; and remained there, while he lived, by an order of the Inquisition. It is without the walls, near the Porta Romana.

He was buried with all honour in the church of the Santa Croce.

P. 152, l. 1.

His cottage (justly was it called The Jewel!)

Il Giojello.

P. 152, l. 5.

There, unseen,

Milton went to Italy in 1638. "There it was," says he, "that I found and visited the famous Galileo grown old, a prisoner to the Inquisition." "Old and blind," he might have said. Galileo, by his own account, became blind in December, 1637. Milton, as we learn from the date of Sir Henry Wotton's letter to him, had not left England on the 18th of April following. It is remarkable that this circumstance is noticed by none of the Biographers.

See Tiraboschi, and Wotton's Remains.

P. 153, l. 10.

So near the yellow TIBER's—

They rise within thirteen miles of each other.

P. 153, l. 15.

Down by the City of Hermits,

Il Sagro Eremo.

P. 154, l. 14.

Oft, as that great Artist saw,

What follows is a description of the Cartoon
of Pisa.

P. 157, l. 3.

Towerless,

There were the 'Nobili di Torre' and the 'No-
bili di Loggia.'

P. 158, l. 9.

At the bridge-foot;

Giovanni Buondelmonte was on the point of
marrying an Amidei, when a widow of the Donati
family made him break his engagement in the man-
ner here described.

The Amidei washed away the affront with his
blood, attacking him, says Villani, at the foot of the
Ponte Vecchio; and hence the wars of the Guelphs
and the Ghibellines.

O Buondelmonte, quanto mal fuggisti

Le nozze sue; per gli altri conforti!

Dante.

P. 159, l. 10.

It had been well, hadst thou slept on, Imelda,

The story is Bolognese, and is told by Cherubino Ghiradacci in his history of Bologna. Her lover was of the Guelphic party, her brothers of the Ghibelline; and an enmity, hitherto but half-suppressed, broke out instantly into open war. The Great Place was a scene of battle and blood-shed for forty successive days; nor was a reconciliation accomplished till six years afterwards, when the families and their adherents met there once again, and exchanged the kiss of peace before the Cardinal Legate; as the rival families of Florence had already done in the Place of S. Maria Novella. Every house on the occasion was hung with tapestry and garlands of flowers.

P. 160, l. 1.

—from the wound

Sucking the poison.

The Saracens had introduced among them the practice of poisoning their daggers.

P. 160, l. 3.

*Yet, when Slavery came,
Worse followed.*

It is remarkable that the noblest works of human genius have been produced in times of tumult;

when every man was his own master, and all things were open to all. Homer, Dante, and Milton appeared in such times; and we may add Virgil.*

P. 160, l. 15.

Struck upward—

The best method, according to an old Professor of the Art.

P. 161, l. 5.

In every Palace was The Laboratory,

As in those of Cosmo I. and his son, Francis.

Sismondi, xvi. 205.

P. 161, l. 12.

Cruel Tophana;

A Sicilian, the inventress of many poisons; the most celebrated of which, from its transparency, was called Acquetta or Acqua Tophana.

* The Augustan Age, as it is called, what was it but a dying blaze of the Common-wealth? When Augustus began to reign, Cicero and Lucretius were dead, Catullus had written his satires against Cæsar, and Horace and Virgil were no longer in their first youth. Horace had served under Brutus; and Virgil had been pronounced to be

Magnæ spes altera Romæ.

P. 162, l. 1.

Gave signs infallible of coming ill,

The Cardinal, Ferdinand de' Medici, is said to have been preserved in this manner, by a ring which he wore on his finger; as also Andrea, the husband of Giovanna, Queen of Naples.

P. 162, l. 9.

One in the floor—now left, alas, unbolted.

Il Trabocchetto. See Vocab. degli Accadem. della Crusca. See also Dict. de l'Académie Françoise. Art. Oubliettes.

P. 163, l. 3.

There, at Caiano,

Poggio-Caiano, the favourite villa of Lorenzo; where he often took the diversion of hawking. Pulci sometimes went out with him; though, it seems, with little ardour. See La Caccia col Falcone, where he is described as missing; and as gone into a wood, to rhyme there.

P. 163, l. 6.

With his wild lay

The Morgante Maggiore. He used to recite it at the table of Lorenzo, in the manner of the ancient Rhapsodists.

P. 164, l. 7.

Of that old den far up among the hills,

Cafaggiòlo. Eleonora di Toledo was stabbed there on the 11th of July, 1576, by her husband Pietro de' Medici; and on the 16th at Cerreto Isabella de' Medici was strangled by hers, Paolo Giordano Orsini.

Isabella was one of the most beautiful and accomplished women of the Age. In the Latin, French, and Spanish languages she spoke not only with fluency, but elegance; and in her own she excelled as an Improvisatrice, accompanying herself on the lute. On her arrival at dusk, Paolo presented her with two beautiful greyhounds, that she might make a trial of their speed in the morning; and at supper was gay beyond measure. When he retired, he sent for her into his apartment; and, pressing her tenderly to his bosom, slipped a cord round her neck.

Eleonora appears to have had a presentiment of her fate. She went, when required; but, before she set out, took leave of her son, then a child; weeping long and bitterly over him.

P. 164, l. 13.

But lo, the Sun is setting;

I have here endeavoured to describe an Italian sun-set as I have often seen it. The conclusion is borrowed, but with some variations, from Dante.





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